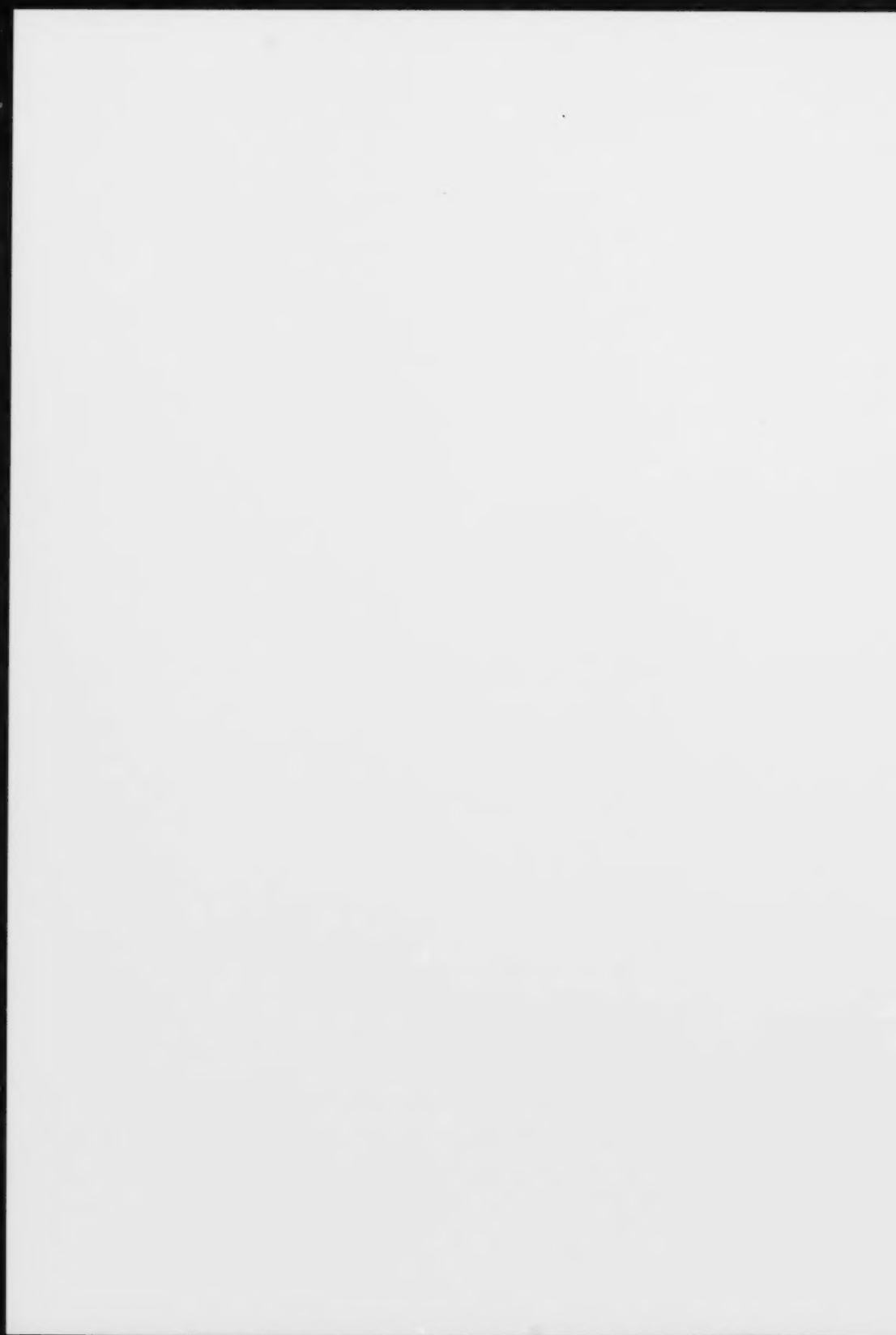


Vernacular Architecture
in the
Codroy Valley



Richard MacKinnon



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— in the —

Codroy Valley



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Mercury Series
History Division
Paper 52

Published by
Canadian Museum of Civilization

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CATALUQUING IN PUBLICATION DATA**

Mackinnon, Richard Paul, 1957-
Vernacular architecture in the Codroy Valley

(Mercury series)

(History Division paper, ISSN 0316-1854; 52)

Includes an abstract in French.

ISBN 0-660-18788-4

1. Vernacular architecture — Newfoundland — Codroy Valley.
2. Codroy Valley (Nfld.) — Social life and customs.
 - I. Canadian Museum of Civilization.
 - II. Canadian Museum of Civilization. History Division.
 - III. Series.
 - IV. Series: Paper (Canadian Museum of Civilization. History Division); 52.
 - V. Title.

NA746.N5M22 2002 720'.9718 C2002-980058-7



PRINTED IN CANADA

Published by
Canadian Museum of Civilization
100 Laurier Street
P.O. Box 3100, Station B
Hull, Quebec
J8X 4H2

Publications advisor: Dr. Peter E. Rider
Atlantic Provinces Historian
and Curator

Senior production officer: Deborah Brownrigg

Cover design: Phredd Grafix

Cover photos: Front cover: *Andrew Gale's house, Millville, Codroy Valley, Newfoundland.*

Back cover: *Alan MacArthur's barn, Upper Ferry, Codroy Valley, Newfoundland.*

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ABSTRACT

The way we build our homes reveals a lot about ourselves, our culture and our history. In fact, a region's architecture is another type of dialect — one that is constructed of wood, bricks and mortar, rather than spoken or written.

This book explores the vernacular architecture of the Codroy Valley, a small Newfoundland community. The book contains a wealth of photographs and building plans; at heart, however, it is the story of a people — a story told through the history of their buildings.

Old houses can become outbuildings of a new home. A second storey can be removed or altered. A new kitchen can be added on. Changes like these often mirror changes in a community's life, and by studying the architecture of a town, village or neighbourhood, we can gain new insights into what people were thinking, and how they once lived. Insights like these can help us better comprehend the stories revealed in our own communities, and give us useful tools in helping make astute decisions about the structures and environments we build, both now and in the future.



RÉSUMÉ

La façon dont nous construisons nos maisons en dit long sur nous, sur notre culture et sur notre histoire. En fait, l'architecture d'une région est un autre type de langage — un dialecte composé de bois, de briques et de mortier plutôt que de paroles et d'écrits.

Cet ouvrage explore l'architecture régionale de la vallée de la Codroy, une petite communauté terre-neuvienne. Il contient une profusion de photographies et de plans d'édifices qui racontent, dans son essence, l'histoire de la population.

De vieilles maisons deviennent les dépendances de nouvelles demeures. Un second étage peut être enlevé ou modifié, une nouvelle cuisine ajoutée. De tels changements reflètent souvent l'évolution de la vie dans la communauté, et en étudiant l'architecture d'une ville, d'un village ou d'un quartier, on peut jeter un nouveau regard sur ce que les gens pensaient et sur leur manière de vivre, autrefois. Une telle connaissance peut nous aider à comprendre ce que recèlent nos propres communautés, et elle constitue de bons outils pour nous aider à prendre des décisions avisées relativement aux constructions et aux environnements que nous bâtissons aujourd'hui et à ceux que nous bâtirons demain.

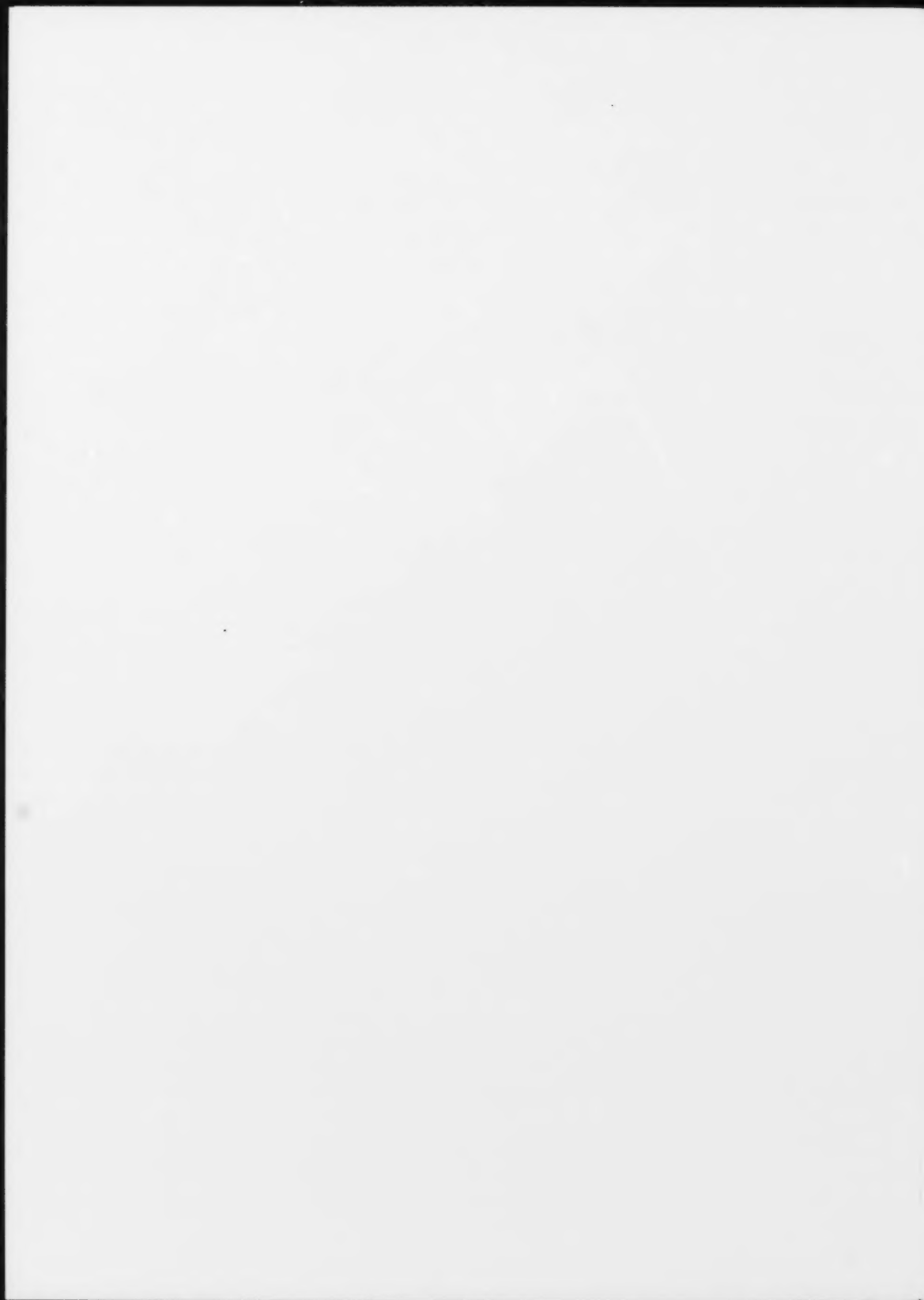
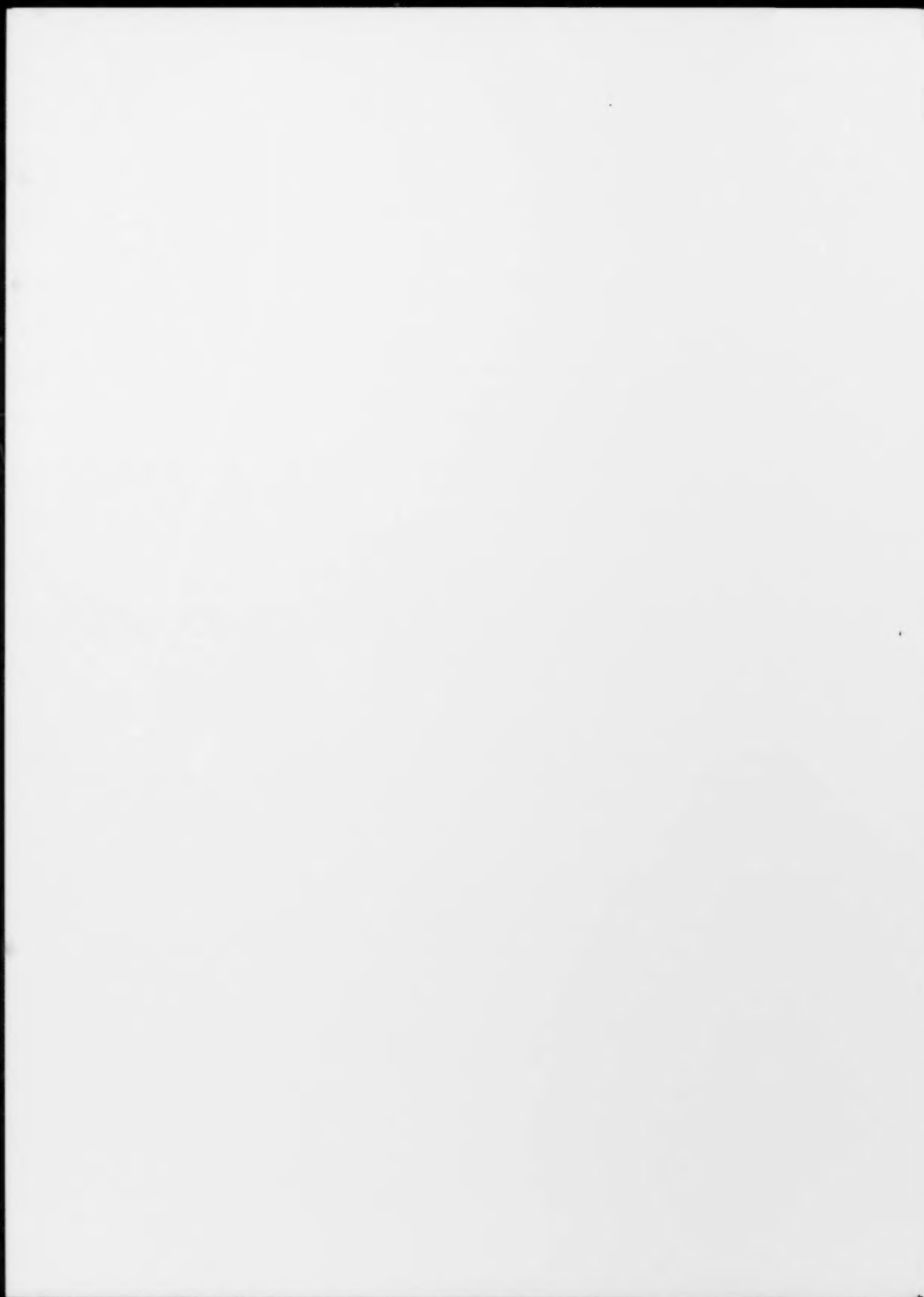


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PREFACE



This book explores the vernacular architecture tradition of the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland, and is based on a wide range of field and archival materials. I view vernacular architecture as built examples of regional language or dialect. By studying this architecture one can gain new insights into what people were thinking about in the remote and recent past. A close analysis of the homes and farms of Codroy Valley people who have settled here for generations can reveal much about culture and history. In the book I outline the development of this building tradition including cultural antecedents, economics, international fashion, mass housing and local traditions.

While there are many photographs and plans of buildings, it is ultimately about people and how they manipulate their physical and natural environment. I hope this book will assist others, including developers, builders, planners or citizens, in making decisions about their architectural needs. Indeed, I hope it will also encourage others to look more closely at the buildings of their own neighborhoods and communities for clues to their history and culture.

There are many people who helped while I researched and wrote this book. First, the people of the Codroy Valley allowed me to invade their privacy by asking questions and measuring and photographing their homes. Without their cooperation this book would not be possible. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided me with a scholarship while studying for my Ph.D. at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Staff at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Beaton Institute archives at the University College of Cape Breton were supportive and helpful. Likewise, library staff at the Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland and particularly the Centre for Newfoundland Studies worked diligently to help me in numerous ways.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my landscape teachers, Dr. Gerald Pocius and Dr. John Mannion from Memorial University of Newfoundland who taught me much about architecture scholarship. Along the way, they and their families became lifelong friends. Other teachers and colleagues in Newfoundland, Cape Breton and beyond have offered various kinds of help, without which this book would not be possible. They are too numerous to mention but I will try to list some of them: Dr. David Taylor, Dr. Diane Tye, Dr. David Buchan, Dr. Martin Lovelace, Dr. Rosemary Ommer, Dr. Robert MacKinnon, Dr. Terry MacLean, Dr. Robert Morgan, Dr. Graham Reynolds, Dr. Charles MacDonald, Dr. Rusty Bitterman, Dr. Toby Smith, Dr. Bernie Herman, Dr. Bob St. George, Dr. Jim St. Clair. David and Blair MacKinnon offered lots of computer help, artist Barry Gabriel redrafted all my maps and plans and Gaelic teacher Kay MacDonald, New Waterford, provided me with Gaelic translations. My parents, Pauline and Francis MacKinnon, encouraged me to learn and follow my interests. I thank the anonymous reviewers who provided

comments and suggestions for making a better book. I take full responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Lastly, I have to thank those who I love dearly, my wife, Joan Weeks, for her support, encouragement and wise advice, and my children, Connall, Breagh and Lachlan MacKinnon.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction



The road winds and curves its way from the turnoff at the Trans Canada highway to the small community of St. Andrews, Codroy Valley. Constructed long before heavy machinery and modern road building equipment, its worn pavement follows an old cart path near the banks of the Little Codroy River. Creaking along in my old Chevy Nova I followed this road until I entered St. Andrews, where I discovered a crossroads complete with a general store, church and community hall. I knew the names of two people who lived here — Neil McIsaac and Michael MacNeil. I was given their names by a schoolteacher friend from home, Anna Campbell, whose forefathers migrated from this Newfoundland Valley to mine coal in Cape Breton Island. As directed, I headed north a few hundred yards until I saw two small houses in a field. The smaller house would be Neil's where, I was told, he lived alone as a bachelor; Mike lived in the slightly larger one with his wife Marge and his two children, Sheldon and Sherri.

Being nervous, I drove past the two houses, continued to drive through Searston, on to Upper Ferry, across the bridge spanning the Grand Codroy River, and through Great Codroy and O'Regans on the river's north side, to get a sense of the Valley's geography (Figure 1). It was early morning and the sun was rising over the Long Range mountains offering a stunning vista of the entire Valley. I turned the car around at the end of the paved road, and returned to St. Andrews. As my car pulled into the driveway, Neil was waiting on the verandah and he invited me inside to his



Figure 1.
Map of Newfoundland.

small, hot kitchen. I explained who I was. He of course knew of me long before I entered his home, as Anna Campbell had forewarned him of my arrival. "I am the fellow from New Waterford who's interested in architecture and who's looking for a place to stay for the summer," I said, as I explained what I was doing on his doorstep. He accepted my hasty explanation and immediately moved to more practical matters, like offering me a cup of tea and helping to arrange a place for me to live. He took me down the hill and through the field to meet his neighbour, Mike MacNeil. We all discussed where I might stay while doing my fieldwork in the Valley.

We looked at a small bungalow available for rent in Tompkins but we could not locate the owner that morning. After more tea and conversation, Neil and Mike welcomed me to situate a travel trailer on land beside Neil's house. It was agreed that I would take my parent's travel trailer, my cameras, notebooks and recording equipment and my new wife, Joan Weeks, to live in St. Andrew's in two weeks time.

Following lunch Mike and Neil invited me to join them in collecting funds for a Valley priest who was moving to a new location. With Mike driving, we travelled by car along the road from St. Andrews to Searston stopping at a number of houses along the way. It gave me a chance to see many of the house styles, ranging from the flat-roofed two-storey type so common in Newfoundland, to modern bungalows and late nineteenth century styles familiar to me from my home in Cape Breton. At each house I observed the way in which Mike and Neil entered without knocking, and proceeded to banter and joke with the owner before discussing the purpose of the visit. After returning from the afternoon excursion it was time for me to return to Cape Breton.

This, in a sense, was my first lesson in Codroy Valley culture. The hospitality offered by my hosts, the offerings of food, drink and conversation, the hot kitchens and bantering were all a part of everyday life in the Codroy Valley. Being primarily interested in material culture, I gave some thought to the collections of objects I was seeing — the houses, the outbuildings, the hay barracks, the churches and stores — but at this stage, I was unfamiliar with the architectural patterns of this region.

On my six-hour boat trip to North Sydney that evening, I had time to think about what I had seen and why I was beginning a study of the vernacular architecture of the Codroy Valley. This picturesque region because of its connection to Cape Breton Island captivated me. Lying on the southwestern corner of the island of Newfoundland, intersected by the Little and Grand Codroy Rivers, and surrounded by the Anguille and the Long Range mountains, this region was settled mainly by Cape Bretoners who travelled across the Cabot Strait between 1840 and 1860 (Figure 2). Following in the footsteps of cultural geographers and material culture specialists who have traced the geographical distribution of specific cultural traits, I wondered whether or not architectural ideas had moved from Cape Breton Island to the Codroy Valley. I asked myself, were the architectural patterns similar in both regions or did Codroy Valley settlers choose a different kind of architectural form than the one's they previously knew?

On another level, I wanted to study the vernacular architecture of a distinct region as some of the best material culture studies have been regionally based.



Figure 2.
*Map of the Codroy Valley,
Newfoundland.*

From my perspective, the Codroy Valley, like my home area of Cape Breton Island, was a unique region. Clearly demarcated geographically, a farming area rather than a fishing community, and possessing a unique ethnic mix of Scots, Irish, Acadian and English, the Valley is different from most other districts in Newfoundland. One goal of my work was to delineate the unique, local architectural characteristics that make the Codroy Valley a distinct region.

Thinking about architectural patterns led to other thoughts about stability and change in architecture, the relationship between so-called "modern" or "mass" housing and "traditional" housing, and the nature of just what constitutes "vernacular architecture." I found myself questioning whether or not the buildings I had seen on my short visit were "vernacular" or some other undefinable form of building. This made me want to explore the nature of vernacular architecture and why this type of architecture is important. In much scholarship the term "vernacular" has been used interchangeably with the terms "folk," "common," "native" or "non-academic" architecture. It is usually placed at the other end of the spectrum from professionally designed architecture or "high style" architecture. Vernacular buildings are often owner built; that is, the owner takes an active hands-on role in the entire process of designing and constructing the building, from obtaining the materials, to deciding upon the size and shape of interior spaces. One scholar uses the analogy

of a “filter” to define the vernacular in architecture. Kingston Heath argues that a fixed region, with its unique character, cultural mix, values, materials, climate and topography can “filter” the conventional ideas about architecture, whether they be folk, popular or high style. What results from this filtering process is vernacular architecture — “product of a place, of a people, by a people.”¹

So my study focuses on the vernacular architecture of and by the people in one distinct place — the Codroy Valley — southwestern Newfoundland. Based on data collected during fieldwork, and from primary and secondary documents, I explore how the Codroy Valley’s vernacular architecture developed from its influences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It follows an idea expressed by George Kubler in *The Shape of Time*: “Now and in the past, most of the time the majority of people live by borrowed ideas and upon traditional accumulations, yet at every moment the fabric is being undone and a new one is woven to replace the old, while from time to time the whole pattern shakes and quivers, settling into new shapes and figures. These processes of change are all mysterious uncharted regions where the traveller soon loses direction and stumbles in darkness.”² This book unravels some of the complex architectural changes of the Codroy Valley with hopefully, minimal stumbling in the darkness.

While exploring architectural change, I am also interested in how vernacular architecture expresses the unique personality of this area (Figure 3). The studying of “regional personality” is a familiar idea to European regional ethnologists, yet it is not so common in Canada. J. Geraint Jenkins describes the domain of this field: “we are concerned primarily with the recording and study of regional personality, and features which distinguish one community from the other whether they be social, oral or material should be our concern.”³ The region’s needs and tastes are



Figure 3. *The Grand Codroy River, the Anguille mountains and Andrew Gale's log pen sheep barn in Milkville, Codroy Valley.*

shown in the way people build and use homes and outbuildings. These are fine expressions of regional personality. Some features that make the Codroy Valley a distinct region include the spaces, layouts and sizes of buildings, the cosmetic details and the vibrant local culture.

I begin exploring Codroy Valley's distinct vernacular architecture by studying the history of the region's landscape. Chapter two, "Forming the Codroy Valley Landscape," describes the buildings in the Codroy Valley during the time of initial settlement. I outline how the original settlers left their mark on the landscape, and I explore cultural transfer, adaptation and change. Next, I examine the antecedents to Codroy Valley architecture, discussing the kinds of buildings common in Inverness County, Cape Breton Island, the region from where the majority of Codroy Valley people originated in the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, I look at some of the common buildings in the coastal community of Codroy village, another source area for Codroy Valley architecture. I follow with a study of the pervasive influence of international fashion by trying to understand the late nineteenth century arrival of international architectural styles to the Codroy Valley. The arrival of mass housing in the form of bungalow styles is closely linked to international fashion. I am primarily interested in the way in which local, older architectural patterns co-exist with these new forms. I address, in this chapter, the way in which traditional and modern forms co-exist. What results from this co-existence is distinctive vernacular architecture, made to meet the needs of the community.

The focus moves from the influence of outside ideas to a close analysis of important local aspects of the Codroy Valley building tradition. I look first at the tradition of house moving, demonstrating how and why people change, modify, and move buildings. "A View From the Farm: The Context of Codroy Valley Homes," is a case study of one Codroy Valley farm, offering an indication of the kinds of buildings and artifacts common to the district's farms. I provide a sense of the kinds of activities occurring within and outside the farm buildings of the region. I then explore aspects of local culture and their influence on buildings. My book ends with some musings and conclusions on the notion of "vernacular" with some suggestions for the future study of vernacular architecture and regional personality.

Original fieldwork gives us the framework on which we base our contemporary research. Vernacular architecture has been studied in Europe for over one hundred years, but only in the past thirty years have North American scholars viewed it as an acceptable field of research.⁴ Folklorists, geographers, architectural historians and archaeologists are interested in vernacular buildings because they provide a more democratic view of the past than do the kinds of buildings traditionally studied in architectural histories. The extraordinary homes of the rich, the political leaders and the successful entrepreneurs usually appear in architectural histories. Vernacular architecture studies usually try to understand the more ordinary buildings lived in by the majority of the population. As Henry Glassie, a leading vernacular architecture scholar says: "historians study not the past but the literary remains of the past. Nevertheless, most of the world's societies have been non-literate. They left no literary remains...."⁵ In contrast, "the landscape is the product of the divine average."⁶

The people who have studied vernacular architecture in Atlantic Canada as elsewhere have been selective in what they have chosen to examine. Churches or barns have received attention, antecedent forms in the Old World have been explored, and building techniques and construction materials have received minute analysis. Moreover, scholars have focused their attention primarily on pre-industrial, rural architecture, and, as with the early study of ballads and songs, the oldest forms have received the most attention. Issues such as gender, class, ethnicity and race are now being explored.⁷

In architectural study, just as with the study of everything from nicknames to ballads, understanding the physical, social and cultural context is all important. So to best understand the architecture of the area I had to decide what fieldwork methods I would use.

I began to study the architecture of the Codroy Valley in the early 1980s not because of any personal knowledge of this district, but because this region of Newfoundland had largely been settled in the nineteenth century by Scots, Irish and French Acadians from Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. A study of this region would not only further my interest in architecture but would give me some understanding of this transplanted Cape Breton culture. I began my fieldwork in the fall of 1981 with a one-day reconnaissance of the Valley before attending a Canadian Association of Geographers conference in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. Accompanied by friends, and not knowing any residents of the Codroy Valley, I traveled the various roads through the district to gather an impression of the region's buildings and landscape. The white sand beaches, the two winding rivers dotted by houses and farms, and the snow-capped mountains overlooking the fertile valley, intrigued me. I was struck by how much the district reminded me of the Margaree Valley in Cape Breton. Upon returning home, I began to plan for an extended stay in the Codroy Valley the following spring.

Because of teaching commitments at the University College of Cape Breton, I did not begin my Codroy Valley fieldwork until June 1982. One of the first problems faced by an outsider trying to do fieldwork in any community is finding a place to live. Neil McIsaac, a friendly, active 75-year-old bachelor and his neighbour, Mike, a 45-year-old community leader, allowed me to locate my trailer on Mike's property, next to Neil's house. Neil, Mike and Mike's family became close friends and readily provided food, drink and hospitality, not just for my wife and me, but also for family and friends who visited us while we lived in the area.

Having a place to lay my head, I was now able to begin some of my required tasks as a fieldworker in material culture. Following the order set by Glassie in his many architecture studies, I began mapping the location of homes in each community, numbering each different house type, and recording examples of each type by drawing measured floor plans, by taking photographs and conducting taped and informal interviews with Codroy Valley people (Figure 4).⁸

An unexpected bonus was the wealth of information that became available to me because I had an older member of the community as my assistant fieldworker. Neil, who was retired from work with the Canadian National Railway, offered to



Figure 4. Conducting fieldwork in the Codroy Valley at Emmanuelle Gillam's kitchen, South Branch, Codroy Valley, 1982 (Gerald L. Pocius in the foreground).

accompany me, and quickly became an invaluable assistant. He helped measure buildings, arranged visits and provided me a view of the community through the eyes of a life-long resident. If I expressed a desire to visit a particular home, Neil would telephone the owner telling him who I was, what I was doing and arrange a time to visit. On many days Neil and I didn't make formal arrangements, but merely appeared at the door of the house and asked permission to look at the house or out-building we were interested in. On only one occasion, in two summers of fieldwork were we refused entry into a building.

While I sketched the floorplan, and took photographs and interior measurements, Neil often carried on a conversation with the person we were visiting. I then joined the conversation making sure to take notes when I completed my tasks. Through these conversations we learned about older buildings that no longer existed, obtained the names and locations of residents who could help us and discussed local news. The residents also had a chance to find out what I was doing in their midst. Rather than being solely an informant (a word which often creates a negative image), Neil became an active participant in recording the extant architecture of his community. It is a practice I would recommend for many studies of tradition.

I also started giving eight by ten black and white photographs as gifts to individuals who allowed me to clamber through their kitchens, parlours, bedrooms, basements and attics (Figure 5). It usually took me a few months or even a year



Figure 5. Archie Francis and Lizzie McIsaac in their kitchen, St. Andrews, Codroy Valley, 1983.

before returning with photographs in hand; in some cases I returned to find that the person who assisted me had died. Nevertheless, remaining relatives were happy to receive this reciprocal gift. The local Lion's Club of Searston knew that I had photographed a number of community residents, and decided to frame and display some of my photographs in their hall. Returning for a visit with photographs gave me an opportunity to ask other questions I had not thought of during my first visit. It's important for researchers to give, as well as to take from a community, but this question of how and in what way is seldom examined in architecture scholarship.

In my fieldwork, I relied on both casual conversations and formal taped interviews. Before measuring and photographing buildings, usually while sitting in a kitchen, I asked residents standard questions about the age of buildings, major and minor alterations over time, construction details, and cultural activities occurring within houses in the past and present. I took notes during these preliminary discussions and often gained important leads concerning people to interview or houses to visit and record. In the evenings, formal tape-recorded interviews were conducted with selected members of the community. Some of these people I had come to know very well, while others I had never formally met. Through these interviews I obtained information on topics ranging from the region's building practices to local customs such as milling frolics and Christmas mummering.

While doing this fieldwork I discovered that family photograph albums are often overlooked but can be an extremely important source for architecture scholarship. Newfoundland archives contain only a few useful photographs of Codroy Valley

vernacular houses and outbuildings but local family photograph albums provide, in some cases, the only record of buildings no longer existing. I used a Pentax camera with close-up lenses as a field-photocopying machine when I stumbled upon a photograph in a family album I wanted to copy. This immediate recording of the document eliminated the need to borrow the photograph or album from a family, who might not have given permission to send the image 500 miles away to Memorial University in St. John's for professional copying.⁹

While taking graduate courses at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I studied the available documents concerning the Codroy Valley during the winters of 1982 and 1983. In my spare time I managed to search the collections at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University's Centre for Newfoundland Studies, the Provincial Reference Library at the Arts and Culture Centre, the Maritime History Group Archives and the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archives. After looking at written documentation, I tried to locate maps, plans and photographs of the region. I quickly discovered that documentary evidence containing architectural information was sparse. Nevertheless, some archival material proved to be extremely helpful. The *Journals of the House of Assembly*, for example, offered insights into some of the community's concerns, as many petitions were regularly sent to the St. John's government from the Codroy Valley. Historic newspapers were also useful. They contained reports on important activities such as weddings, wakes, community concerts, dances and social news. Official records such as census materials, deeds, and land grants provide names, dates and boundaries, but reveal little about the actual buildings and activities within the Codroy Valley. My own fieldwork proved to be the most useful data. By talking to Codroy Valley people, measuring their kitchens and parlours, as well as documenting their bedrooms, attics and cellars, I obtained a clear sense of the region's vernacular architecture.

In Cape Breton Island, my fieldwork took the form of traverses — a methodology often used by cultural geographers — to provide a broad sample of house types of the region. Essentially, I would drive my car through Inverness County communities looking through the windshield for distinctive buildings and outbuildings. I then chose specific buildings to photograph and record in more depth. To gather information on the architecture of communities where Codroy Valley residents came from, I examined archival materials such as land grants, local histories, diaries, travellers' accounts and newspapers housed at the Beaton Institute Archives, University College of Cape Breton. Again, as with the Codroy Valley, I obtained the most useful information from my own fieldwork observations.

What I learned shows us how a local, vernacular building tradition develops and how it changes with the passage of time. It shows not only which architectural forms were more important historically, but also which aspects of the building tradition and local culture have influenced the architectural personality of the district. Such research should help professionals and governmental agencies provide more culturally appropriate dwellings to meet the needs of the distinct rural cultures that characterize this country.

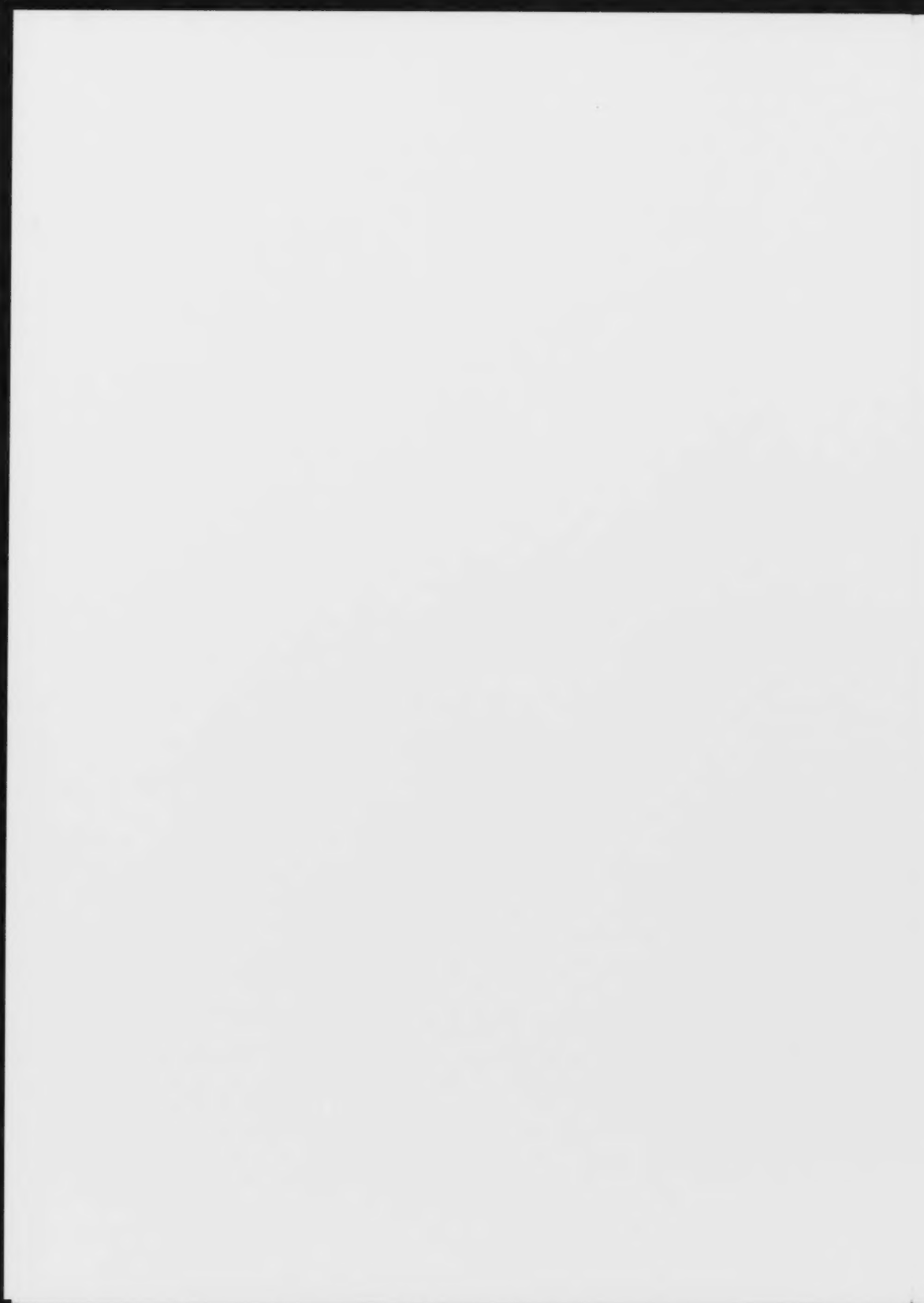
This book asks the fundamental question "what are the major influences — external and local — upon a local vernacular building tradition?" In discovering the answer to this, it examines the impact of the Cape Breton Island settlers, the influence of mass architectural fashion, the affect of local traditions such as alterations and house movings, the contexts for the district's homes — the Codroy Valley farmstead, and the influence of local culture on architecture.

To define the distinct regional form that emerges in the Codroy Valley, you have to identify the historical context. So the obvious place to start is by examining the migrations to the area and the kinds of buildings in the Codroy Valley during what Fred Kniffen refers to as the period of "initial occupation."¹⁰ Were the buildings in the homeland of Cape Breton Island models or templates to work from? Were these buildings transferred without modification, or were new models chosen in this move to a new land? By examining these questions, hints of how a building tradition evolves at this all-important first stage of permanent settlement are clearly obtained.

Notes

1. Kingston William Heath, "Defining the Nature of Vernacular," *Material Culture*, 20 (1988), 5. For a more recent discussion of the complexities of the term "vernacular" see: Peter Ennals and Deryck Holdsworth, *Homeplace: the Making of the Canadian Dwelling over Three Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 7–18; 91–120.
2. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 17–18.
3. J. Geraint Jenkins, "Fieldwork and Documentation in Folk-life Studies," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 90 (1960), 260.
4. Members of the Vernacular Architecture Forum dominate current North American vernacular architecture scholarship. See, for example, their most recent collection of essays: Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins, Eds. *Gender, Class and Shelter Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, V (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995).
5. Henry Glassie, "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifact's Place in American Studies," in *Prospects: An Annual of American Studies*, ed. Jack Salzman (New York: Burt Franklin, 1977), III, 30.
6. Glassie, "Meaningful Things," 32.
7. A fine survey pointing out some of the issues addressed by vernacular architecture studies is: Dell Upton, "Ordinary Buildings: A Bibliographical Essay on American Vernacular Architecture," *American Studies International*, 19 (1981), 57–75; see also Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins, eds. *Gender, Class and Shelter*. For surveys of Canadian vernacular architecture see: Peter Ennals and Deryck Holdsworth, *Homeplace: The Making of the Canadian Dwelling over Three Centuries*; Harold D. Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994).

8. Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), pp. 15–16; Numerous guides for researching and recording buildings have been produced by Canadian provincial and federal and government agencies. See, for example: Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, *Researching a Building in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, 1984); Margaret Carter, *Researching Heritage Buildings* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1983); Harold Kalman, *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1980).
9. The use of photography in fieldwork is discussed in Edward D. Ives, *The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Fieldworkers in Folklore and Oral History* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974), pp. 74–79; Bruce Jackson, *Fieldwork* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), pp. 194–226.
10. Fred B. Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 55 (1965), 551.



CHAPTER 2

Forming the Codroy Valley Landscape



By the 1840s, large groups of Scots and smaller numbers of French Acadians and Irish settlers began to migrate from Inverness County, Cape Breton Island, to the west coast of Newfoundland and particularly to the Codroy Valley (See Figure 2).¹ There is no agreement as to why this inter-regional migration began at this time but a number of explanations have been attempted. According to Margaret Bennett's oral history research in the Codroy Valley, the Cape Breton Scots left because they were "dissatisfied with the land tenure uncertainty in Nova Scotia," and wished to be "free from heavy taxes and troublesome landowners."² This explanation supports the French historian of the North Atlantic fishery, De la Morandière, who cited a 10 October 1851 letter from a lieutenant on the vessel *Broquet*. He states: "Codroy and her rivers attract a large number of inhabitants who emigrate from Cape Breton in order to exempt themselves from the tax the British Government makes its population pay. The population of these two rivers, that today is near 250 souls, increases each year by 1/6th."³ Rosemary Ommer, however, argues that settlers left Cape Breton for the Codroy Valley because by the time of their arrival in Cape Breton, only marginal farmland was available; earlier settlers already occupied the better lands.⁴ Ommer believes that the Scots left Cape Breton for the Codroy Valley in search of good or better land. The prospect of confederation with Canada also troubled some Cape Bretoners instilling in some, the motivation to move. For others there was a perceived threat of financial penalties on all land not in production. Most importantly, according to Ommer, people moved because of their close kinship affinity. Ommer shows that elements of the clan system persisted in Cape Breton Island and in the Codroy Valley, and that some families migrated because other members of their kin groups decided to move to southwestern Newfoundland. She says:

no single element was discernible as being in control of decision-making in the migration process; women moved to marry and their kin followed later; families moved because of insecurity of tenure and their kin followed later; families also moved concurrently in large extended kin groups.⁵

More recent research has shown that Cape Breton faced severe crop failures caused by potato blight (*phytophthora infestans*), a fungus which grows well in cool, damp weather.⁶ This potato blight resulted in food shortages and an island-wide famine between 1845 and 1851 — virtually at the same time this disease was affecting places such as Ireland.⁷ The areas where Codroy Valley emigrants came from suffered greatly according to University College of Cape Breton archivist Robert Morgan: "Mabou lost half its crop in 1846 and the 1847 planting was a total failure.... Broad Cove lost its crop in 1845 and 1847..." and conditions there were said to be "deplorable."⁸ It is most probable, however, that a combination of factors

provided the impetus for the major migration from Cape Breton to the Codroy Valley in the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition to the migrants from Cape Breton Island, others who were fishing along the southwest coast of Newfoundland for many years also settled the coastal area of the Codroy Valley region. Olaf Janzen points out that as early as the 1730s French, English and some Irish were living in Cape Ray and at other small settlements on the southwest coast including that of Codroy Island.⁹ Janzen mentions that a Recollet priest recorded two dozen people living at Codroy Island when he visited there in 1735 to perform baptisms.¹⁰ The treaty of Utrecht in 1713 gave Newfoundland to England; so an English population moved along the south coast of Newfoundland and reached the western coast including the village of Codroy and Codroy Island by the 1760s.¹¹

Codroy village and the small island in the harbour, Codroy Island, essentially became English fishing settlements. A close examination of a manuscript census reveals that by 1838 — the period when settlers were arriving from Cape Breton Island — the English presence was still very evident in this southwestern region of Newfoundland. Jonathan Gale, a native of the Isle of Wight, was living in Crabb's Barrachois, just north of Codroy village in 1838. He had eight children and had lived there since 1808, earning his living by the salmon and herring fishery. In the Great and Little Codroy river district there were "about 14 or 15 families consisting of near 80 persons," who were "mostly English, Scotch and Jersey descent."¹² In addition to fishing salmon and cod, these residents spent the winter making casks for the nearby fishery. This census shows that by the time of migration from Cape Breton Island, the Codroy region had been greatly influenced by the English fishing population prevalent on the east and south coasts of Newfoundland.

By 1857 the population of the region had increased dramatically. The village of Codroy had 192 residents of whom only six were born in England; the majority were born in Newfoundland. In the Codroy Rivers, however, we see the influence of the migration from Cape Breton Island. For example, in Great Codroy River there were 230 residents; sixteen were born in Scotland, three in Ireland and ninety-one in the British colonies. Most of this latter group was from Cape Breton Island and the remaining 120 were native-born Newfoundlanders.¹³

While both Codroy village and the Codroy Valley River districts had large native-born Newfoundland populations, there were some major differences in these two settlements. For example, in the river districts there were 298 Roman Catholics and only forty-one followers of the Church of England. These figures point to the large number of Cape Breton Island Roman Catholic Scots, Acadian and Irish who were making their way to the Codroy Valley. In the village of Codroy, in direct contrast, there were sixty-two Roman Catholics and 130 Anglicans, indicating that English ethnicity was predominant in this coastal fishing village.¹⁴

Like most people in Codroy Village, some Codroy Valley residents were fishing in 1857. In the Little and Great Codroy Rivers there were thirty-four large boats from four to five quintals in size, forty-five nets and seines and three vessels engaged in the seal fishery. While fishing was relied upon, there was also a great deal of

agriculture. In 1857 there were 542 acres of improved lands in the Little and Great Codroy rivers and the people grew 426 tons of hay, forty bushels of wheat and barley, 303 bushels of oats, 412 barrels of turnips and 3328 barrels of potatoes. Other household products included thirty-seven and one-half hundred weight of butter, one hundred weight of cheese, fifty yards of unfulled cloth, 403 yards of fulled cloth and twenty-four hides.¹⁵

The 1857 census of buildings in each settlement clearly shows the differences between Codroy Village and the Codroy Valley. For example, the Codroy Valley had no fishing rooms in use, while Codroy Village had thirty-four active fishing rooms. The Codroy Valley had fifty-two inhabited houses with fifty-five accompanying stores, barns and outbuildings. In contrast, Codroy village had thirty-three inhabited houses and no accompanying stores, barns and outbuildings. These figures indicate the primacy of fishing in Codroy village, and that of farming in the Codroy Valley.¹⁶

What is clear from this short overview of the Codroy valley is that for a century prior to the arrival of settlers from Cape Breton Island, currents of migration and diffusion came from eastern and southern Newfoundland. By the mid-nineteenth century there were at least two major groups in the region. One was primarily English and Protestant, living on the coast and engaging in the traditional fishery; the other primarily Cape Breton and Catholic, settling along the banks of the Little and Grand Codroy rivers, and focusing primarily on farming.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Codroy Valley forests contained pine, spruce, balsam fir, birch and tamarack or juniper, as it is often called in the Codroy Valley. By 1840 the Codroy Valley settlers had at least a generation or two of experience working and building with wood and their understanding of the forest and wood lore was widespread. For example, white pine (*pinus strobus*) was used for ship masts, floorboards, interior walling, panelling, fireplace surrounds, window sashes, beds and furniture. White spruce (*Picea glauca*), in contrast, was for framing, interior wall boarding, flooring and shingles. Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), or var, as it is often called in the Codroy Valley, was a multi-purpose wood because of its abundance in this region. It also provided many early settlers with shingles for their houses and outbuildings. Yellow birch (*Betula alleghensis*) and white birch (*Betula papyrisera*) were used mainly for fuel, but were sometimes used in flooring. Birch bark served as insulation and a vapor barrier underneath shingles. Tamarack or juniper (*Larix laricina*), a very dense tree, was used for framing smaller outbuildings, fence posts, axe handles, farm tools and equipment. Throughout the nineteenth century, boat builders often used tamarack for various purposes including ship's knees (angled pieces cut from roots bent by contact with rock or hard soil) which joined the ribs of vessels to deck timbers.

In Cape Breton Island, elm (*Ulmus americana*), a hardwood, was a fuel supply; this species was also used for making furniture and for framing houses and outbuildings. Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), a softwood, was used for the framing of houses, barns and ships because it hardened with age. Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*), hardwoods, were used for flooring and furniture. White ash (*Fraxinus americana*) was used for making baskets, barrels and for chair

caning. Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), a hardwood, provided the raw materials for furniture, wood sleds, wagons, carts and wheels; while red oak (*Quercus rubrum*), a hardwood, was used mainly for shipbuilding.¹⁷

Knowing the materials they had for building lays the foundation for exploring the kinds of homes and outbuildings they were constructing. The following questions are explored in this chapter: What are the types of buildings Codroy Valley residents chose to construct in this pioneer district? What kinds of technology were used to build their homes? What floorplans were predominant? Did any particular form emerge as a distinct Codroy Valley house-type?

Log Architecture

Some oral history accounts claim that the earliest house-types in the region were log houses built along the riverbanks.¹⁸ Capt. J. Polkinghorne, writing in 1838, calls Codroy Valley houses "mere wooden huts containing two or three rooms."¹⁹ He states that there is a tradition of living in summer and winter houses in this region: "on the approach of winter they retire with their cattle to houses they have built in the woods...."²⁰ By 1871, Rev. M.F. Howley maintained that most dwellings in the region are "substantial and neat" frame houses, but adds that the people "have gradually abandoned the temporary log huts in which they first dwelt, which are now handed over to the occupancy of the inferior animals."²¹ This conversion of the initial dwelling into a barn was a common tradition in many pioneer regions and lasted well into the twentieth century in the Codroy Valley.²²

One might easily dismiss Howley's reference to log huts, since, as several scholars have pointed out, in many parts of North America people assume that the earliest buildings of a region are log merely because log buildings have become symbols of the frontier spirit.²³ But Howley adds validity to his description by mentioning some specific details about these structures:

*These log huts are quite a peculiar feature in the landscape, being built after the approved system of the American backwoods pattern, and very different from our conventional tilt. They have the advantage of being held together without nail or peg of any kind. The logs are peculiarly notched at the ends, and laid horizontally upon each other....*²⁴

Howley is describing horizontal log structures. He even acknowledges that these forms are distinct from the Newfoundland tilt, "a small, single-roomed hut constructed of vertically placed logs used seasonally by fishermen, furriers and woodsmen."²⁵ Writing from the perspective of an East Coast Newfoundlander, he views these buildings, as being different from what he was familiar with. To him, they are patterned after American forms. Some of the existing log barns in the Codroy Valley use horizontal log construction and may date from this early period of settlement. I have not found any evidence of vertical log construction in the Codroy Valley



Figure 6. James Dolan's log pen sheep barn, O'Regan's.

dating from this early period, although the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings has documented two log outbuildings with vertical stud construction in the nearby community of Woodville. However, they no longer exist.²⁶

In the Codroy Valley, older horizontal log technology was used in outbuildings, while more modern frame technology was used in houses. More than twenty log ice houses, sheep barns and hay barns were built using log construction in the valley (Figure 6).

Most log outbuildings use horizontal log construction. Some have minimal end notching leaving wide spaces between the logs that are left in the round. Some use squared logs with minimal V end notching with exterior sheathing vertically laid over the logs (Figure 7). Some are single log pen barns while others use double and triple pens (Figure 8). These barns are very difficult to date. Some date from the settlement period, and others were constructed as recently as the 1940s. Log architecture of this kind is clearly found in Cape Breton Island. It also appears throughout the Atlantic region at this time.²⁷

It is difficult to decipher the floorplans in the earliest log homes; Polkinghorne mentions that these buildings have "two or three rooms" which may indicate a hall-parlour plan or a derivation of a hall-parlour plan.²⁸ Some, no doubt, used the basic one-cell or one room plan but we need more evidence from documents or archaeological research to confirm this. The existing frame dwellings in the region show that the hall-parlour plan was indeed an acceptable choice for Codroy Valley builders.



Figure 7.
V Notching, Billy O'Quinn's log
sheep barn.



Figure 8. Andrew Gale's log pen barn, Millville.

Frame Architecture

The earliest frame buildings in the Codroy Valley are one and one-half storey structures with symmetrical facades (constructed from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century). The existing buildings of this type are located near the mouth and along the banks of the Grand River and in the nearby community of Woodville. There does not seem to be an ethnic preference as Scots, English, French and Irish settlers all built homes of this type (Figure 9).

Builders of these frame dwellings chose a limited number of floor plans to suit the needs of their families. A ground-floor plan of a large kitchen with two small sleeping rooms is found in the Codroy Valley (Figure 10). This form may derive from the ubiquitous one cell plan, common in many areas of North America and the British Isles.²⁹ While travelling through the region in 1871, Rev. Howley provides a description of a house of this type belonging to an Acadian family:

We stopped at the house of one Dusett's [Doucette] and to some lunch. We were received with a hospitality I can designate only as overwhelming. The joy of the whole family knew no bounds. The house was a very comfortable one and might be looked upon as a type of these now existing on the French Shore. Built of substantial framework, boarded and clapboarded outside. The windows open down the center after the French style. On entering the front door we find our-



Figure 9.
Map showing the location of one and one-half storey frame houses in the Codroy Valley.

selves in a large apartment occupying the whole ground floor except a small portion boarded off on the right and forming two bedrooms. The walls are wainscotted with planed and seasoned pine boards placed perpendicularly. Around the room are placed several seamen's boxes which answer the double purpose of chairs and receptacles for a great variety of domestic articles. The walls are ornamented with a number of French religious pictures in very light colours, there is no chimney, but in the centre of the apartment stands a large cooking stove which renders the atmosphere oppressively hot and odorous of culinary ingredients. In a short time we were treated to a savoury dish of mutton chops, cooked in a peculiarly appetizing French style, fried eggs and eschalottes.³⁰

This floor plan seems to be a spatial pattern common in nineteenth century Acadian communities of Cape Breton Island and the Maritimes. Peter Ennals has conjectured that the principal element of these early Acadian forms was "a large multi-purpose room (salle commune), which served as a kitchen, dining, living and work space, and which probably served as a sleeping area — perhaps being curtained off as a 'zone de sommeil' as the need arose."³¹ Eventually this curtained area was boarded in, creating more privacy for residents and resulting in a distinctive floorplan.

The house type described by Howley used interior stoves rather than stone chimneys. While no central or end stone chimney houses exist in the Codroy Valley at present, the discovery of a crane amidst the remains of a mid-nineteenth century

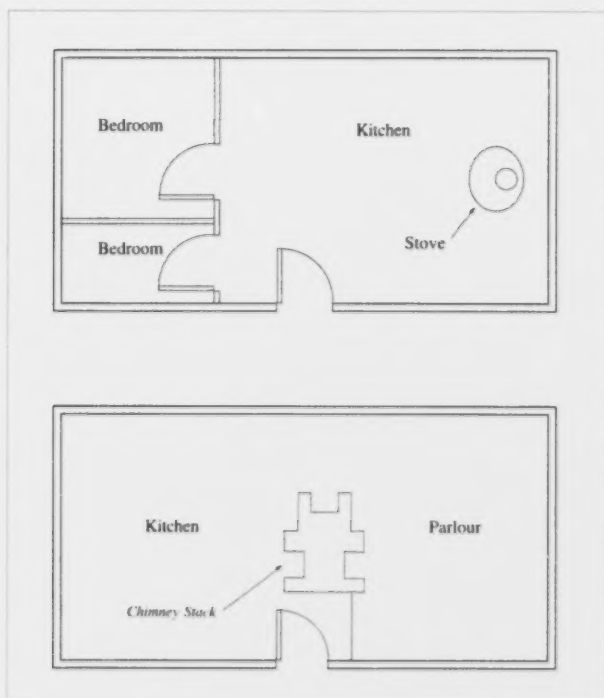


Figure 10.
Floor plans of one and one-half
storey frame houses.

Ryan farm on the North Side of the Grand River suggests that some open hearths were used in the valley. One possible reason for the lack of evidence of stone chimneys is that, by the time of migration to the Codroy Valley, wood and coal stoves were becoming very common throughout Eastern Canada.³² As early as the 1820s and 30s wealthy citizens were importing stoves to Atlantic Canada from as far away as Quebec, the United States and Great Britain.³³ By the 1830s, 40s and 50s, there were foundries making stoves in Halifax, Pictou, New Glasgow, Windsor, and Bridgewater. It was not until the 1890s, however, that a foundry was established in Cape Breton Island.³⁴ While Howley's description is comparable to forms found in Acadian areas and Cape Breton Island, my Codroy Valley fieldwork did not uncover any buildings using this plan. Perhaps houses of this type were ones people transformed most readily into barns after they built new dwellings. This would explain their absence in the landscape today. By contrast, there are at least fourteen one and one-half storey frame houses still standing, all using hall-parlour plans or a variation on the hall-parlour form (See Figure 9).

The hall-parlour plan — one large kitchen and a slightly smaller parlour on the ground floor (See Figure 10) — was the most common plan used at the mid-century period in frame dwellings of the Codroy Valley. This form is ubiquitous throughout North America at this time.³⁵ Glassie points out that Scotch-Irish settlers in America readily used the hall-parlour floor plan because they were familiar with it from their homeland.³⁶ Its antecedents lie in the British Isles.³⁷ Glassie argues that settlers in the southern United States adopted log construction techniques from their German neighbors, but retained their own familiar spatial usage — the hall-parlour plan.³⁸ There are two possible source areas for this plan in the Codroy Valley. In Newfoundland, English settlers on the east and south coast of the island used this floorplan by the eighteenth century. Gerald Pocius in a study of housing on the Avalon Peninsula, a region peopled by Irish and English, points out that the hall-parlour plan was indeed a common form by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³⁹ The route of migration to the Codroy Valley may well have been along the south coast to the fishing village of Codroy and then inland to the settlements along the rivers, or from Cape Breton Island.

Fred O'Quinn's house in Searston is a typical example of this form (Figures 11 and 12). This one and one-half storey building faces the Grand Codroy River and the present-day road that winds along the banks of the Grand Codroy River. Originally the house was 23 feet by 17 feet. In the 1920s a 14 foot extension was added to include a porch, bathroom and larger kitchen. The front door opens directly into the kitchen; there is no hallway and the stairwell to the sleeping area upstairs is situated close to the front door. In size, the kitchen is 14.5 by 17 feet while the parlour is 9.5 by 17 feet. The building sits on a fieldstone foundation chinked with seaweed, and there is a root cellar under the kitchen reached through an outside door. A gable roof is said to have been "cut down" over 60 years ago forming the present-day gambrel-like roof.⁴⁰ The upstairs is divided into two rooms, but according to family members was originally divided into four small rooms. The floor of the house is composed of boards nailed over logs hewn flat only on top (one can readily



Figure 11. Fred O'Quinn's house, Searston.

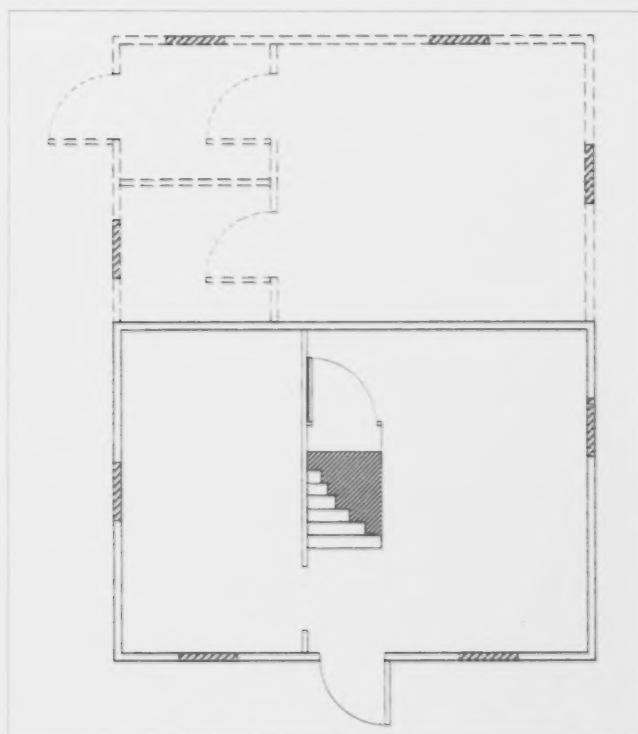


Figure 12.
Floor plan, Fred O'Quinn's
house, Searston.

see the rounded logs from the vantage point of the root cellar). The original kitchen is now the living room, the original parlour is now a storage room, and the back addition contains the new kitchen, bathroom and porch.

Eight of the fourteen nineteenth century one and one-half storey frame dwellings in the Codroy Valley have a three room floor plan with a kitchen, parlour and bedroom which is derived from the hall-parlour plan. John Bruce's house (Gus Bruce's) in the area known as "The Block" is a fine example of this type (Figures 13 and 14). The dwelling faces the sea, and originally was 24 by 18 feet with a central door flanked by symmetrically placed windows. The ground floor consisted of a 13 by 18-foot kitchen, an 11 by 12-foot parlour, and a 6 by 11-foot bedroom to the rear of the parlour. Originally owned by John Bruce, Gus Bruce's grandfather, the house is dated by oral history to "over 100 years old," a common date applied to many old houses in Newfoundland.⁴¹ According to family tradition, this house was the second house on the property; the first one built by John Bruce was situated closer to the seashore.⁴² Although it is difficult to accurately date when this house was built, the time of major alterations is more readily verifiable. According to family members, the present back kitchen was added in 1915, when Gus was a boy of five years old.⁴³ Windows were replaced in the 1930s and a second back addition was not constructed until 1970.⁴⁴ The house is located on a fieldstone foundation twelve inches in height with no cellar. Originally there was a stairway to the upstairs in the south corner of the kitchen.



Figure 13. John Bruce's house, *The Block*.

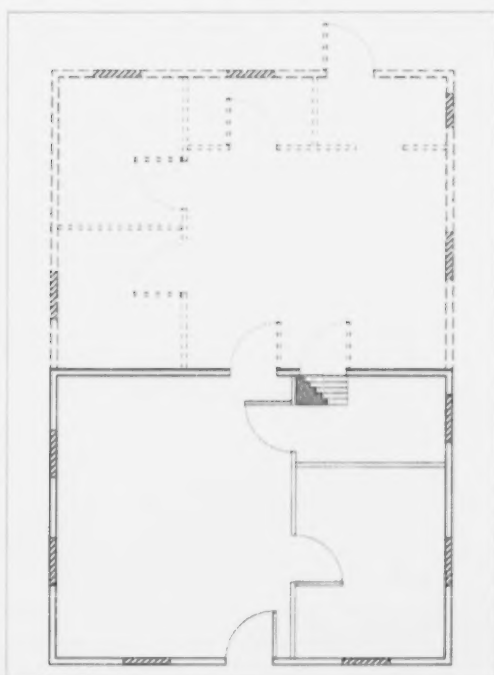


Figure 14.
Floor plan,
John Bruce's house,
The Block.

Other houses of this type include Andrew Gale's, Millville (Figures 15–16) and John Gale's, Millville (Figure 17). All of these houses are located on or near the Grand River. No buildings of this type have been located on the Little River.

By the 1850s, 60s, and 70s when houses of this kind were being constructed, the Codroy Valley was a developing farming community. Observers of the period continually remark on the agricultural potential of the region and the valley's fine farms. For example, M. J. Kelly, in his "Report on the Fishery" in 1857, observed the prosperity of one Irish settler in the Great Codroy region when he travelled up the Grand River by boat to obtain his census:

The largest farm on the river belongs to a Mr. Ryan. He has 26 head of cattle, 40 sheep, raises 400 barrels of potatoes besides other crops, cuts 40 tons of hay, and his farm is a perfect model of neatness. In fact, the neatness and order observed on this farm, as well as the out-offices connected with it, were such as would not disgrace the most agricultural country in the world.⁴⁵

Kelly observed that there were 233 Catholics who had a chapel with a clergyman who occasionally visited the area from St. George's Bay; there were only seven Protestants in the community at this date. He stated that each of the families produced on average 70 barrels of potatoes, 9 barrels of grain, 10 barrels of turnips and possessed 6 head of cattle, 10 sheep and 10 pigs.⁴⁶ Kelly's report shows that



Figure 15.
*Andrew Gale's house,
Millville.*

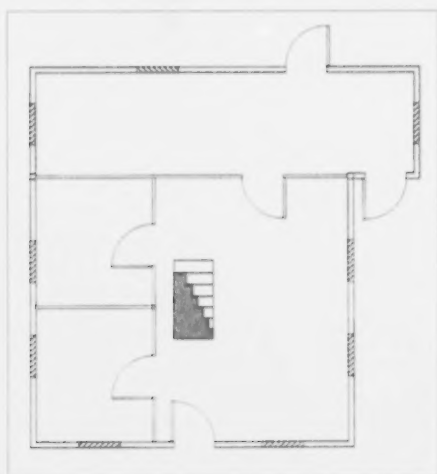


Figure 16.
*Floorplan,
Andrew Gale's house,
Millville.*



Figure 17.
*John Gale's house,
Millville.*

Codroy Valley emigrants of this period were not primarily engaged in the fishery, but were farmers trying to make a living off the land.⁴⁷ Another observer, James S. Hayward, a land surveyor from St. John's, remarks on the fine agricultural production carried out by Codroy Valley settlers:

*The land at Codroy and at the Great River appears very good for agricultural purposes, and is availed of by the residents of the Great River, who are chiefly settlers from Cape Breton....*⁴⁸

It can be safely stated that by the mid-nineteenth century, the Codroy Valley was establishing itself as a farming region. Kelly and Hayward show that the settlers from Cape Breton Island who, by the mid-nineteenth century, had already established houses and outbuildings along the riverbanks were imposing order on this frontier landscape.

The reference to the chapel by Kelly is interesting because public buildings such as churches may be viewed as sources of innovation for vernacular regions. While I have not found a detailed description of this building, by 1857 this church was perhaps the most modern form of architecture in the region. The Roman Catholic organization would have possessed the capital and the connections with the outside world to use the newest available materials and techniques. Churches in vernacular districts often set a standard in carpentry and workmanship that local builders aspire to. Local carpenters often assist in gathering of materials and constructing these public buildings.

This farming tradition of the region and its associated buildings are clear examples of transfer from Cape Breton Island. The Codroy valley has a floodplain and a similar environment to Broad Cove, Margaree and Cheticamp Cape Breton Island — areas where Codroy Valley settlers came from. The same range of crops, livestock and technology are evident in both the antecedent district and Codroy Valley farms.

Outbuildings

I examined conventional dwelling houses of the settlement period, but what kinds of outbuildings were being constructed at this same time? Cultural geographers and folklife scholars such as Fred Kniffen, Wilbur Zelinsky and Henry Glassie have led the way in acknowledging that barns and outbuildings are an important part of the cultural landscape to be recorded and studied.⁴⁹ Much of the research on barns has been of two kinds: typological studies focusing on particular barns, and more recent studies focusing on particular regions, providing a clearer sense of the variety of barn forms in a district.⁵⁰ More recent work has tried to address theoretical concerns such as the dominance of one ethnic group in a multi-ethnic region, and the degree of variation within a barn building tradition.⁵¹ Within Canada there has been some research conducted in Ontario and Quebec, and some recent research in Newfoundland, but on the whole, there has been little critical attention paid to outbuildings.



Figure 18. Roy McIsaac's barn, South Branch.

In addition to the log barns already discussed, other outbuildings include the English barn type, found throughout North America, and the hay barrack — a once popular impermanent structure that is now uncommon in most North American farm districts. As in Cape Breton Island and much of the Maritimes, through the nineteenth century, the English barn was the most common barn type (Figure 18, Figure 19). My fieldwork in the valley indicates there are at least fifteen examples of this form in various Codroy Valley communities. Most have gable roofs (Figure 20); only two have gambrel roofs. Most have a central runway with a bay on each side, one area used for hay storage, the other for housing animals.



Figure 19.
Interior of Roy
McIsaac's barn
showing a flat-
bottomed river boat
hanging from a
barn bent.



Figure 20.
Pat Ryan's barn,
O'Regans.

The hay barrack, a portable hay storage structure, was readily employed well into the 1980s (Figure 21). The hay barrack was a cheap, common outbuilding for hay storage, used from the period of initial settlement. In 1983 there were still more than ten hay barracks being used in the region. An advantage of the barrack is that it can be left for the winter in difficult to reach hay fields. The farmer is able to situate a barrack on the fertile, low *intervale* land along the rivers, and even on the small islands in the rivers. The hay in barracks is sometimes hauled in winter over the snow and ice to the barn. Farmers who don't have a hay barn find the hay



Figure 21. Ned Gale's hay barrack, South Branch.

barrack a useful and inexpensive replacement for a large hay barn. An unassisted farmer, with materials readily available on his farm can easily build it.⁵² A fine example of a farm that uses hay barracks is Andrew Gale's in Millville. He owns a log pen barn for his sheep, but no hay barn *per se*; thus, two hay barracks are used for hay storage.

The hay barrack is an interesting artifact of diffusion. Common on the East Coast of Newfoundland amongst Irish settlers, it was also extensively used in Cape Breton Island, particularly in the Margaree River district. It most likely came to the Codroy Valley via the Cape Breton settlers, who brought with them many other aspects of farming culture which radically altered the shape of the Codroy Valley landscape in the mid-nineteenth century.

The barracks, barns and houses of this formative period show that Codroy valley architecture is, at the same time, conservative and dynamic. During the mid-nineteenth century, Codroy Valley builders used many building types. Both log and frame construction techniques were employed to construct four types of plans: (1) the one cell plan, (2) derivative of the one cell plan, (3) the hall-parlour plan, and (4) a derivative of the hall-parlour plan. The one-room plan is common in many pioneer settlements, while the three-room plan of kitchen and two small bedrooms seems to be unique to the Acadian settlers of the Maritimes. In the Codroy Valley this three room form was used not only by Acadian settlers but also by settlers of other ethnic backgrounds. The hall-parlour type (and a local variation on this form) became the most common floor plans of the region. There does not seem to be an ethnic preference for this form; it was employed by various groups of Codroy Valley settlers.

The use of log construction is evident at this pioneer stage and continues to be evident in outbuilding construction. It is fair to say that, by making homes and outbuildings in these ways, residents were conservative in their building choices. They brought some of their familiar architectural ideas across the Cabot Strait to the Codroy Valley, but in the move to the Codroy Valley, these settlers were also innovative in allowing groups to exchange and borrow architectural ideas. Margaret Bennett shows that French, Gaelic and English settlers readily borrowed some of their folk culture, developing various forms of "macaronic" traditions — a combination of cultural expressions from the three main ethnic groups.⁵³ The three-room derivation of the one cell plan is an example of innovation; it was introduced by Acadians, but borrowed by other ethnic groups who found this plan useful for life in a pioneer farming community.

There is no evidence that early settlers of the Codroy Valley chose to construct stone houses and outbuildings. Wood was abundant in this pioneer landscape and was the predominant building material. Nevertheless, stone was used in homes of this period for fieldstone foundations and for the construction of open-hearth chimneys.

After coming to an understanding of Codroy Valley's architectural landscape and its Newfoundland history I decided it was time to explore where the ideas of Codroy Valley builders came from. To do this I cannot not just go back to Cape Breton but must go back in time to discover more about the early settler's architecture. What

kinds of houses did the grandparents of people such as Fred O'Quinn, John Bruce, Ned Gale and Andrew Gale live in? Were these similar to or different from the houses built in the Codroy Valley? Next, I'll explore the architecture of the two major antecedent areas for the Codroy Valley: Inverness County, Cape Breton Island and the coastal fishing community of Codroy.

Notes

1. See Margaret Bennett, *The Last Stronghold: Scottish Gaelic Traditions in Newfoundland*, Canada's Atlantic Folklore and Folklife Series, No. 13 (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1989). See also: John Szwed, *Private Cultures and Public Imagery: Interpersonal Relations in a Newfoundland Peasant Society*, Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies, No. 2 (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1966); Rosemary Ommer, "Highland Scots Migration to Southwestern Newfoundland," in *The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography*, ed. John Mannion, Social and Economic Papers, No. 8 (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1977), pp. 213-33; Rosemary Ommer, "Primitive Accumulation and the Scottish clann in the Old World and the New," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 12 (1986), 121-41.
2. Margaret Bennett, "Some Aspects of the Scottish Gaelic Traditions of the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland," M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland 1975. p. 58.
3. Charles De la Morandière, *Histoire de la Pêche française de la morue dans l'Amérique septentrionale 9 de la révolution à nos jours* (Paris: maisonneuve et Larose), III, p. 1179.
4. Ommer, "Highland Scots Migration," p. 221; Abraham Gesner also points out that most of the people who had arrived in Cape Breton Island in 1842 were squatters on private property: "With a pig, a cow and a few cakes of maple sugar, some are ready to migrate at an hour's notice." Abraham Gesner, *The Industrial Resources of Nova Scotia*, (Halifax: A. and W. MacKinlay, 1849), p. 72.
5. Ommer, "Highland Scots Migration," p. 231; see also pp. 221-232.
6. Robert Morgan, "Poverty, Wretchedness and Misery: The Great Famine in Cape Breton I, 1845-1851," *The Nova Scotia Historical Review*, 6, No. 1 (1986), 88.
7. Morgan, "Poverty," 88-90; see also John J. Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation*, University of Toronto Department of Geography Research Publications, No. 12 (Toronto: Published for the University of Toronto Department of Geography by the University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 15-32.
8. Morgan, "Poverty," pp. 91-92.
9. Olaf Uwe Janzen, "'Une Grande Liason': French Fishermen from Ile Royale on the Coast of Southwestern Newfoundland, 1714-1766: A Preliminary Survey," *Newfoundland Studies*, 3 (1987), p. 190.
10. Janzen, p. 191.

11. *Historical Atlas of Canada, 1: From the Beginnings to 1800*, ed. R. Cole Harris (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), plate 25.
12. List of Inhabitants Western Shores of Newfoundland 1838, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, G.N.1/1/1 7000.8.
13. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1857.
14. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1857.
15. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland, 1857.
16. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland, 1857.
17. Thanks to Dr. Stephen Manley, a forester and biologist and Dean of Science at University College of Cape Breton, for assistance with this description of the forests of each region.
18. See, for example, my fieldnotes, August 12, 1983, concerning a discussion with Tom O'Quinn, a 95 year old resident of St. Andrews, Codroy Valley, MUNFLA, MacKinnon Codroy Valley Architecture Collection. Tom remembers living in a log house along the banks of the Little Codroy River. See also Margaret Bennett's oral history of the MacArthur family: "Some Aspects," Chapters 4, 5.
19. Captain J. Polkinghorne, "Report of a Visit to the West Coast, 12 September, 1838," GN 1/13/a, Box 42/5/10, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.
20. Polkinghorne, "Report." A student paper on the settlement of Codroy comments: "Parsons... had built summer and winter quarters: the summer one was sort of a log cabin roughly hewn and erected on the beach. Here during the summer the fishery was pursued. When winter approached the families moved about six miles inland to escape the bitter cold of the seashore. Inland there was a ready supply of game, as well as firewood." Augustine O'Quinn, *The Fishing Settlement of Codroy Before 1900*. St. John's: Maritime History Group Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland, n.d., p. 5; for an article discussing the seasonal migration from one dwelling to another see: Phillip E.L. Smith, "In Winter Quarters," *Newfoundland Studies*, 3 (1987), 1-36.
21. Rev. M.F. Howley, "Reminiscences of a Trip to the Western Shore of Newfoundland," *Terra Nova Advocate*, 9 February 1882, p. 4.
22. See Chapter 6 of this book on house moving and alteration.
23. See Harold Shurtleff, *The Log Cabin Myth* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1939); Mac E. Barrick, "The Log House as Cultural Symbol," *Material Culture*, 18, No. 1 (1986), 1-20.
24. Howley, "Reminiscences," p. 4.
25. G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin and J.D.A. Widdowson, ed. *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 567; see also: D.C. Tibbets, "The Newfoundland Tilt," *Habitat*, 11, No. 5 (1968), 14-17;

- Shane O'Dea describes different forms of tilts in his, "Simplicity and Survival: Vernacular Response in Newfoundland Architecture," *Newfoundland Quarterly*, 13, No. 2 (1982), 19-25; John Mannion refers to tilts being the initial dwelling: Mannion, *Irish Settlement in Eastern Canada*, p.143.
26. See Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, Neg. 01XB23, Phillip Vollier barn, estimated date of construction, 1835; Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, Neg.01XB26, Reuban Kendall barn, estimated date, 1875. While I have not discovered vertical log construction dating from this early period, I have found some evidence of vertical log construction dating from the early years of the twentieth century.
 27. See Richard MacKinnon, "Log Architecture on Cape Breton Island: Cultural Borrowing and Adaptation," *Material Culture*, 24 (1992), 1-18.
 28. Polkinghorne, "Report."
 29. Studies focusing on the one cell plan in other places are numerous. See, for example, Henry Glassie, "The Types of the Southern Mountain Cabin," in *The Study of American Folklore*, ed. Jan Harold Brunvand, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), pp. 529-62; Abbott Lowell Cummings, *The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 22-24.
 30. Howley, "Reminiscences," p. 4
 31. Peter Ennals, "The Folk Legacy in Acadian Domestic Architecture: A Study in Mislaid Self Images," *Dimensions of Canadian Architecture*, Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada: Selected Papers. Vol. 6, ed. Shane O'Dea and Gerald L. Pocius (Ottawa: Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, 1983), p. 9.
 32. See Joann Latremouille, *Pride of Home: The Working Class Housing Tradition in Nova Scotia, 1749-1949* (Hantsport, Nova Scotia, Lancelot Press, 1986), p. 30; George MacLaren, *The Romance of the Heating Stove* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1972); Peter Ennals and Deryk Holdsworth, "Vernacular Architecture and the Cultural Landscape of the Maritime Provinces: A Reconnaissance," *Acadiensis*, 10, No. 2 (1981), 103.
 33. MacLaren, p. 10.
 34. MacLaren, p. 10.
 35. See: Glassie, "Types of the Southern Mountain Cabin,"; Ennals and Holdsworth, "Vernacular Architecture and the Cultural Landscape," pp. 337-340; Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*, University of Pennsylvania Publications in Folklore and Folklife, No. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 64, 66-67, 78, 80-81, 89, 97, 152-153; Bernard L. Herman, *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), pp. 19-21; Allen Noble, *Wood, Brick and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), I, 49, 56; Thomas C. Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), pp. 35, 88-90, 165.

36. Glassie, "Types of the Southern Mountain Cabin," p. 407.
37. See, for example, Alexander Fenton and Bruce Walker, *The Rural Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981); Iowerth Peate, *The Welsh House: A Study in Folk Culture* (Liverpool: Hugh Evans and Sons, 1944); Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community*, Publications of the American Folklore Society, New Series, Vol. 4 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), pp. 327-424.
38. Glassie, "Types of the Southern Mountain Cabin," p. 407.
39. Gerald Pocius, "Architecture on Newfoundland's Southern Shore: Diversity and the Emergence of New World Forms," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Camille Wells (Annapolis: Vernacular Architecture Forum, 1982), pp. 217-230.
40. For a discussion of such renovations in Newfoundland see: Gerald Pocius, "Raised Roofs and High Hopes: Rebuildings on Newfoundland's Southern Shore," *Material Culture*, 19, No. 2-3 (1987), 67-84.
41. See Gerald Pocius, "Oral History and the Study of Material Culture," *Material History Bulletin*, No. 8 (1979), pp. 65-70. The use of oral history in material culture research is becoming more common. See, for example, Charles E. Martin, *Hollybush: Folk Building and Social Change in an Appalachian Community* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984).
42. Joseph H. Bruce, Gus's father, was two years old when the family moved into the house. Gus died in 1980.
43. When the dating of a building coincides with a death in the family, a wedding or some important family occasion, it is more likely that the date offered is accurate. See Pocius, "Oral History," 66-67.
44. Richard MacKinnon fieldnotes, August 2, 1982, MUNFLA, MacKinnon Codroy Valley Architecture Collection.
45. M.J. Kelly, Report on the Fishery, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, 1858, Appendix, p.436. Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.
46. Kelly, p. 436.
47. It seems from this census that there were more farmer-fishermen living on the Little River: "The distance from here to Little Codroy is about 6 miles. I went in the boat there this morning, expecting to be back in time for the tide, to leave for St. George's Bay; but it came to blow so strong when we arrived there that we were compelled to leave the boat and return by land. All the residents up the river had come down to prosecute the fishery during the summer which is better here than in Great Codroy, being 60 quintals per man; — of salmon and seals, 200 of the latter and 8 barrels of the former, are taken in the settlement. The people who farm most here are Scotch people who have settled here lately. They raise in the settlement 800 barrels of potatoes, 50 barrels of turnips and they possess 70 head of cattle and 60 sheep. The population is 109, of whom 75 are Catholics, and 34 Protestants." Kelly, p. 436.
48. James S. Hayward, Report of James S. Hayward, Surveyor, St. John's, on a Visit to the Western Portions of Newfoundland, *Journals of the House of Assembly*, 1866

- Bills and Miscellaneous Papers, p.431. Hayward describes a Codroy Valley farm on this visit: "I also visited Paul Hall, who has been residing 41 years on his farm. He informs me that he lives altogether by farming, but his sons catch a little salmon; has a number of cattle and sheep. I also saw some ox hides and calf skins in process of tanning on his farm.... The greater part of the hay that is cut on that river is made from wild grass, which is mowed in the early part of the month of August, made and put into stacks, where it remains until the river freezes over, when it is brought to the different farms by horses and oxen.... It is estimated that there are at Codroy, including both rivers, 700 oxen and cows and 1700 sheep" (p. 431).
49. Numerous studies exist; see for example: Henry Glassie, "Barns Across Southern England: A Note on Transatlantic Comparison and Architectural Meanings," *Pioneer America*, 7, No. 1 (1975), 9-19; Alvar W. Carlson, "Bibliography on Barns in the United States and Canada," *Pioneer America*, 10, No. 2 (1978), 65-71.
 50. See for example: Charles Dornsbusch and John Heyl, *Pennsylvania German Barns*, Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 12 (Allentown: Schleiter's, 1958); Peter Ennals, "Nineteenth Century Barns in Southern Ontario," *Canadian Geographer*, 16, No. 2 (1972), 256-70; Allen G. Noble and Seymour Gayle, "Distribution of Barn Types in Northeastern United States," *Geographical Review*, 72 (1982), 155-70.
 51. See for example: Henry Glassie, "The Variation of Concepts Within Tradition: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York," in H.J. Walker and W.G. Haag, eds. *Man and Cultural Heritage: Papers in Honor of Fred B. Kniffen*, Geoscience and Man, 5 (Baton Rouge: School of Geoscience, Louisiana State University, 1974), pp. 177-235; Robert Blair St. George, "The Stanley-Lake Barn in Topsfield, Massachusetts: Some Comments on Early Agricultural Buildings in Early New England," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Camille Wells (Annapolis: Vernacular Architecture Forum, 1982), pp. 7-23.
 52. For a discussion of hay barracks see: MUNFLA 71-39.
 53. Margaret Bennett, "Scottish Gaelic, English and French: Some Aspects of the Macaronic Tradition of the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland," *Regional Language Studies: Newfoundland*, No. 4 (1972), pp 25-30. This combination of traditions has also occurred in other areas of Atlantic Canada but little attention has been paid to this phenomenon. Neil Rosenberg points out in a survey of Folklore research in Atlantic Canada that, the "most complex and least studied" issues are "acculturation and assimilation...." Neil V. Rosenberg, "Regionalism and Folklore in Atlantic Canada," in *Canadian Folklore Perspectives*, Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Publications, Bibliographical and Special Series No. 5, ed. Kenneth S. Goldstein (St. John's, Newfoundland: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of Folklore, 1978), p. 7.

CHAPTER 3

The Codroy Valley Building Tradition: The Antecedents



When crossing the Canso Causeway, connecting mainland Nova Scotia to Cape Breton Island, the traveller has a magnificent view of the shoreline of Inverness County. Dotting the coastline are many small farms of 100 to 200 acres with houses and outbuildings stretched along the sloping hills. The communities where Codroy Valley migrants originated are all part of this district. Inverness County, Cape Breton's largest county, encompasses all the land from the northwest tip to the southwest corner of the island (Figure 22). I started with an architectural survey to discover the choices available to the men and women who migrated across the Cabot Strait to make new homes along the banks of the Grand and Little Codroy Rivers in Newfoundland. My understanding of this region comes from field trips and travel combined with documentary materials and information collected by the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings. I also explore the influence of a second antecedent area, the coastal community of Codroy and its English fishing culture. Through all this I become convinced that when people migrate they take their customs, traditions and knowledge of material culture and buildings with them.

Inverness County's architecture is characterized by diversity. There is evidence of log architecture, a common building form in many pioneer landscapes. There



Figure 22.
*Map of Cape Breton Island showing
the communities where Codroy Valley
residents originated.*

are also stone houses, a physical reminder of the Scottish background of many of the area's original settlers. Various types of frame buildings, ranging from one and one-half storey nineteenth century homes to modern C.M.H.C bungalows, are the most common houses in the vernacular landscape today. All of these forms help to shape the distinct landscape and identity of Cape Breton Island.

The island has received much attention from scholars who have focused on everything from the 18th century French settlement of Louisbourg to the Loyalist city of Sydney; from the industrialization of the island to the development of labor unions; and on the unique Scottish Gaelic and Acadian presence on the island. Aside, however, from research on reconstructed 18th century buildings at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site, the architectural recording projects sponsored by local historical societies, and the surveys conducted by the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, there has been little scholarly attention paid to the island's architecture.¹ I will provide a cursory survey of the kinds of vernacular buildings in the Margaree Valley, Cheticamp, Broad Cove, Inverness, Judique and Port Hood areas of Cape Breton — areas from where Codroy Valley settlers originated in the mid-nineteenth century.

By 1800 Cape Breton had about 2500 settlers, mainly Acadians, Irish, Loyalists and some Scots from mainland Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. These settlers lived around the coast and were primarily cod fishermen and their families. The interior lands along the inland rivers and Bras D'Or lakes remained the domain of the Mi'kmaq people. Between 1802 and 1845 more than 20,000 Scots from the Western Highlands and Islands settled Cape Breton Island, clearing forests and displacing the fishery with farming as the island's principal economic activity.²

First, I examine construction materials and techniques available in these Inverness County communities at the time of Codroy Valley migration. An examination of log construction reveals that there are close parallels with the log building tradition of the Codroy Valley.

Log Construction

Various writers indicate that a particular form of log construction was a predominant feature in the nineteenth century landscape of Inverness County. One of the questions R.G. Haliburton asks in his 1861 survey of the region is "What can a farm of 200 acres, with a log house and barn and 40 acres cleared, be purchased for per acre?"³ He adds, according to one farmer's reply, "a farm of that description could be purchased for from 20 pounds to 40 pounds per acre." A second respondent states, "from 10 pounds to 20 pounds."⁴ It is difficult to determine Haliburton's definition of "log house and barn;" he might be referring here to buildings constructed of logs left in the round, or to ones built from logs squared with an adze or hewing axe.⁵ Haliburton is not alone in his use of this word to describe vernacular dwellings, for many travellers — from the early 19th century to the local historians of the twentieth century — frequently use the word "log" in their descriptions of the island's buildings. For example, John F. Hart — a local historian from the Margaree Valley — states that

"hardy pioneers" erected "log cabins" as temporary dwellings which were eventually replaced by frame dwellings when settlers were more firmly established in the region.⁶ Hart, like other local historians, believes that log dwellings were the first form of temporary dwellings in his region and that other more advanced forms developed as people became more settled. This idea has been shown to be fallacious in other pioneer landscapes; many log buildings were constructed originally as permanent dwellings complete with exterior sheathing of clapboards or shingles to cover the rounded or squared logs. Hart may well be promoting the log cabin mythology that has been such an important part of pioneer nostalgia in North America.⁷

While I have not discovered any extant log buildings in the communities from where Codroy Valley settlers came from, the numerous accounts from other nearby centres throughout Inverness County suggests that log building was indeed a common pattern throughout the county. For example, one of the more reliable descriptions supporting the contention that log buildings were part of the traditional repertoire in the region is a 19th century personal experience account published in the Gaelic newspaper *MacTalla*:

River Denys runs into Malagawatch Lake and when we came in 1821, there wasn't a white man living there. We started to cut down the forest where we intended establishing everyone near a neighbor and after that, everyone began building little log houses, thatched between the logs and narrow sticks, hewn with an axe or adze put down for a floor.⁸

This description, published 70 years after the time of settlement, outlines the building of log structures; however, we are not told whether the logs are placed in a vertical or a horizontal position, or whether the logs are on sills or are earthfast. We are told that interstices between logs are chinked, that buildings contain floors made from hewn logs and that neighbours live close to each other in the landscape. While the details in this account suggest our author is not romanticizing about the settlement period, the contemporary reader must be wary because of the long period between the actual settlement experience and its recording.

Other writers have recorded their perceptions more immediately after encountering Cape Breton log structures. Augustus Wallet DesBarres, the Solicitor General of Nova Scotia who received his appointment shortly after Cape Breton was annexed to Nova Scotia in 1820, describes an 1818 visit to a farm owned by a Scottish immigrant on the Bras D'Or Lakes:

The farm lot where I was, consisted of 200 acres of land, 15 of which were cut down and cleared away in the form of a square; about nine acres of this was sown and planted, the remainder being used as meadow ground: in the centre of the clearing stood the dwelling house, constructed of square logs dovetailed into each other, and covered over at the top with shingles; in the inside a cleanliness and neatness of arrangement seemed to bespeak peculiar comfort and content...⁹

Desbarres describes the end notching as being dovetailed — a form of cornering used in horizontal log dwellings throughout North America. There is no agreement upon the origin of this kind of horizontal log construction. Some argue it was brought to America by Pennsylvania Germans and then diffused to other parts of North America.¹⁰ Others see it as a form brought to America by the Swedish settlers of the Delaware Valley in the late 1630s.¹¹ More recently, however, Warren Roberts, a leading North American folklife scholar, has changed his mind about these theories and postulated the idea that a “special type of log construction flourished in New England as early as 1650.”¹² He sees this form as having roots in Great Britain and surmises that it may have been Scottish settlers in areas as far afield as Virginia, Maryland and Nova Scotia who brought this form of construction to the New World.¹³ According to Roberts: “Unless more information comes to light from England and Scotland, it may never be possible to be more precise about the British origins of log construction.”¹⁴

Whether or not Roberts is correct awaits further architectural fieldwork. Nevertheless, there are many accounts of log structures in the areas Codroy Valley migrants came from. A traveller to Cape Breton in the mid-nineteenth century provides a detailed description of horizontal log construction:

*The log-house or cottage is a rough but rather picturesque construction; and when first erected is not uncomfortable. The logs of pine or hemlock are laid one upon another with their ends let into notches, and the interstices filled with moss and clay. The chimney is of stone built with mud or clay. Rough boards form the roof which is sometimes constructed of poles and layers of thick bark. Nails and glass are the only materials for which money is needed. There are many degrees of comfort and improvement in these log houses. In the winter — if in bleak situations, they are often protected from the cold by spruce trees cut down and placed in an upright position against the walls most exposed to the winds.*¹⁵

We are not given a description of the kind of end-notching used in this building that would provide the degree of detail necessary to compare this type with other documentable forms. It is evident, however, that the observer here is referring to a horizontal log structure with end notching and some form of stone chimney. The birch bark Haliburton refers to was commonly used underneath the shingles or clapboard for insulation in many nineteenth century Cape Breton Island houses.¹⁶ He also describes how cut-down spruce trees are used as a form of insulation.

Numerous other accounts of this construction form abound throughout the Maritimes. For example, an observer of Acadians in New Brunswick describes horizontal log construction as early as 1761:

The Acadians make themselves a winter house in 2 or 3 days — They cut down a number of pine trees, suitable to the occasion — square them, and place them one upon another, fastening them with trunnels, and fill the crevices with moss; the

*chimney they secure with clay — they cover their houses with slabs and bark — they are very good broad axe men.*¹⁷

Unfortunately, most available descriptions do not provide detailed information concerning the kind of corner notching, the size of rooms or the placement of chimneys that would make the accounts more useful.

Examples of horizontal log construction are known from New England to Texas, and a large body of literature exists on this architectural form. Kniffen and Glassie say it is an ancient form of construction: "Horizontal log construction... originated in the Mesolithic with the Maglemosian culture which was centred in Denmark, southern Sweden and northern Germany. By the Bronze Age horizontal logs had replaced vertical posts as the commonest method of construction from France to Russia and from Norway to Czechoslovakia."¹⁸ Whatever its origins, whether German, Swedish or British, this form of construction was appearing in Cape Breton Scottish Gaelic communities by the early nineteenth century. Neither in my initial survey of Inverness County, nor in the records of the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings are there examples of log buildings. Recently, the open-air living museum devoted to Scottish Cape Breton culture in Iona, Cape Breton Island, constructed a horizontal log building to represent the "first" house of the Cape Breton Scottish immigrant. The building's design is based on research conducted by Museum staff on the remains of two horizontal log dwellings (Figure 23).¹⁹ In October 1987, three horizontal log houses were discovered in the communities of Marble Mountain and



Figure 23. Log House, Nova Scotia Highland Village, Iona, Cape Breton Island, 1987.

Alba, Inverness County. All three buildings date from the first generation of Scottish Cape Breton settlement, but had major alterations at the end of the nineteenth century. I have photographed, documented and measured one of these structures — the Cassell-McEachern house in West Alba (Figures 24 and 25).²⁰

Situated on the Bras D'Or Lakes and 300 feet from the road, the house is now 31 feet by 18 feet in size with a kitchen, pantry, parlour and two small bedrooms. However, this layout dates from the latter end of the nineteenth century when major renovations occurred in the house: the addition of wainscoting and pantry in the kitchen, the removal of a large, stone, end chimney, and the adding of a large extension for bedrooms and a parlour. Originally it was 21 feet by 18 feet in size containing one room with a large, stone, end chimney. Sleeping quarters were in the loft reached by a ladder in a corner by the chimney. The original size of the building can be determined by examining the loft where one can see pieces of the original end wall still in place above the first floor ceiling. Each wall of the original log pen (18 feet by 21 feet) is made of twelve rounded logs, V notched in the corners, with a squared 6 inch by 10 inch log on the top serving as a foundation plate for the roof and its rafters. There were originally five trusses of rafters with dovetailed collar beams and no purlins, placed on average 3.5 feet apart. These trusses are made of squared, hand-hewed logs held together by wooden pins. Two more trusses were added when the house was extensively altered at the end of the nineteenth century. The roof is sheathed with 9-inch wide pine boards and covered with wooden shingles. The logs are not exposed but are covered with laths and 18 layers of shingles with a 6-inch face. Judging by the spacing between the logs, it does not seem that the bare logs were ever left exposed to the weather. I suspect that, from the date of its original construction, the first period of Scottish settlement in the early nineteenth century, it was always sheathed with shingles or clapboard. Houses such as this were probably more common in Inverness county than we are led to believe by the few remaining examples. In some cases these buildings were expanded or attached to the larger frame houses that became more popular as the nineteenth century progressed.²¹

The size of the log pens, the V notching, and the spacing between the logs is identical to the features of log barns located in the Codroy Valley. The knowledge of log construction was carried in the minds of the settlers from Cape Breton Island to the Codroy Valley.

While horizontal log technology was carried to the Codroy Valley, another form of construction common in Cape Breton Island was not brought across the Cabot Strait. Père Anselme Chiasson mentions that in Chéticamp, Inverness County, a community from where many Codroy valley Acadian families came from, "Les premières demeures furent bâties en bois équarri à la hache, pièces-sur-pièces. Il restait encore de ces maisons à la fin du dernier siècle."²² In this type of construction, squared or rounded logs are inserted horizontally into grooved posts spaced at convenient intervals with the ends most often being dovetailed. Corner and intermediate posts use short logs and do not restrict the size of the building.²³ This type of construction is certainly not unique to Cape Breton or even the Maritimes;



Figure 24. Cassell-McEachern's log house, Alba, Cape Breton Island.

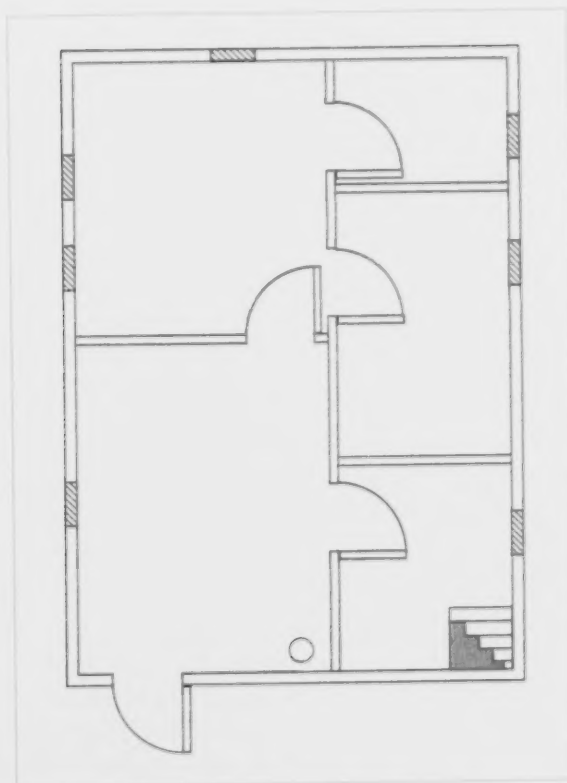


Figure 25.
Plan, Cassell-McEachern's house,
Alba, Cape Breton Island.

it was popular throughout Canada in the pioneer settlement stage and is known by names such as "Manitoba Frame," "Red River Frame," "Hudson's Bay Frame," and even "Canadian style."²⁴ It has been argued that it "was the prevailing method of wood construction in early French Canada."²⁵ The Village Acadien historic site in Caraquet, New Brunswick, provides numerous examples of Acadian piece-sur-piece construction. This technique was one of the predominant types in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Maritime Acadian communities.²⁶ While this form of construction was evident in the Acadian community of Cheticamp, it was not carried to the Codroy Valley. The reason was that, during migration in the mid-nineteenth century, frame houses were becoming more popular in Cape Breton communities. Log construction was being relegated to the barns and outbuildings. This explains the preponderance of log construction in the barns of the Codroy valley.

There is also evidence of vertical log construction in Cape Breton Island. Bishop Joseph — Octave Plessis, the Bishop of Quebec from 1806 to 1819, toured the lower provinces in 1812 describing many coastal communities in the Atlantic region. After visiting Port Hood, Cape Breton Island, he commented on the chapel recently constructed by the Scottish inhabitants:

Imagine about thirty pieces of square timber placed vertically, enclosing a space about 40 square feet and supporting badly assembled rafters, the ensemble covered with cross-boards, nailed over the whole edifice, with a half-foot opening between one board and another, so that rain, wind and hail could come in without obstacle....²⁷

As with horizontal log construction, this is a very old technique. As Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie say, "vertical post construction seems to have originated in the Near East in the Neolithic and to have spread across Europe as a major element in the Neolithic complex."²⁸ This construction form was largely vestigial in Europe at the time of European settlement of the New World. It seems to have "experienced a brief rejuvenation in timber-rich colonial America."²⁹ An example of a house constructed of squared logs placed vertically into a sill is found in the Cape Breton Acadian community of Poirierville, Isle Madame, Richmond County. Because the vertical posts are placed into a sill, this form is sometimes referred to as "poteaux sur sole." Amadée Poirier owns the house that was built in 1839. In 1889 the builder added a frame section for a larger kitchen. It is insulated with large sheets of birch bark and is clad with clapboard, making it indistinguishable from other houses in the community.³⁰ If the posts were driven directly into the ground, the form would be referred to as "poteaux en terre," "pieux en terre," or "pièces en terre."³¹ This form is also called the "piquet" method of construction because posts are sunk into the ground to form a palisade-like wall. Other examples are found at the reconstructed Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park as well as at other locations in North America including the American South and Newfoundland.³²

Log construction techniques were known and used by settlers in the areas of Cape Breton from where Codroy Valley people migrated. But given that buildings

were constructed of logs, what kinds of interior floor plans were available? Chaisson provides a detailed description of the interior of an Acadian pièce-sur-pièce house in Cheticamp:

The house is not finished inside. The floor itself is made of scantling wood and sometimes small, round pieces of wood or 'rollons....' One table, used for eating, is made of beams. There are no chairs, only benches used as seats. On the wall, a shelf is used for dishes. The beds were made of wood in the form of simple bunks, but with one striking feature. There were no bedrooms nor partitions.... On the ceiling near the very top of the wall, there is an opening and a ladder is fixed against the wall for climbing up there. It is the attic where everyone puts everything back in place — wool, linen, beans, and where boys often slept on straw mattresses on the floor...³³

The floor plan of this Spartan house seems to consist of one large room [Salle Commune] where all of the family's daily activities occurred. Accounts written by travellers in other Maritime Acadian communities indicate that this floor plan was widespread. For example, Robert Hale, in his journal of a voyage to Nova Scotia in 1731, describes Acadian houses thus:

They have but one room in yr houses besides a cockloft, cellar and sometimes a closet.... They have not above 2 or 3 chairs in a house, and those wooden ones, bottom and all. I saw but 2 mugs among all ye French and ye lip of one of ym was broken down above 2 inches...³⁴

And Captain John MacDonald reported to Desbarres in 1795,

The premises of everyone [Acadians] seem to be a house from 18 to 25 feet long and as many in breadth without porch or partition but the outer door opening immediately into the sole room.... As they all sleep, eat, cook, smoke, wash, etc. in this house or room, I need not say it must look black and dirty enough particularly as the houses are now old.... I had almost forgot to mention that their houses have a cellar under ground for the roots etc. to which they descend by a trap door in the floor.³⁵

Local oral tradition says that Margaret MacPhail, a writer who bases her work on experiences in rural Cape Breton, describes the Cassell-MacEachern house in the novel, *Loch Bras D'Or*:

As he looked about the warm cozy kitchen he noted though it was a log house the walls were ceiled with wide pine boards with heavy open beams overhead, the large stone chimney was in the centre of the side wall. At one end of this room was a curtained built-in bed for the parents, under it a trundle bed that was pulled

out at night for Kirsty. The weaving loom took quite a space at the other end of the kitchen with the spinning wheel and jackreel. On the wall beside the loom pegs formed a warping frame. It was all familiar to Hamish.

As he climbed the steep stairway to the loft, he saw four beds built in along the eaves. Two were on either side of the chimney, which were cozy from the well-heated stones. From the rafters hung dried herbs such as tansy, burdock, calandula, mint, blackberry roots all of which Mrs. McNabb prepared skillfully for various ailments, huge branches of goldenrod for bright yellow dye.³⁶

These accounts suggest that the medieval pattern of using only one main room for all living activities was common in many Cape Breton log houses. Other scholars such as Glassie, Isham and Brown have shown that this floor plan is widespread in North America from the 17th to the 20th centuries.³⁷ Studies in other regions show that log buildings were constructed not only with this one-room plan, but were built with a multitude of floor plans from the simple one-room type to the complex multi-room plan. The diary of the Reverend Murdock Stewart describes the log houses of the Scottish settlers of West Bay, Cape Breton Island, as consisting of two apartments on the main floor and a loft above. He points out that as late as 1843 almost all of the houses at West Bay were of log construction.³⁸

Frederic Cozzens, a traveller through the Maritimes, describes a modification on this one room plan in a mid-nineteenth century visit to an Acadian house:

The little house is divided by a partition. The larger half is the hall, parlour, kitchen and nursery in one. A huge fireplace, an antique spinning wheel, a bench and two settles or high backed seats, a table, a cradle and a baby, very wide awake, complete the inventory. In the apartment adjoining is a bin that represents, no doubt, a French bedstead of the early ages.... As you look at the walls, you see the house is built of timbers, squared and notched together, and caulked with moss or oakum.³⁹

What does this cursory survey of log construction and the floorplans of log dwellings in 19th century Inverness County tell us? First, it indicates that this form of building was one of the choices available from the early to mid-nineteenth century. I am not suggesting that this was the only form available to Inverness County builders, but merely that it was one of the possible choices.

I do not have census data to describe various house types for Inverness County of this time. But a look at available data for other Maritime communities reveals what I think the pattern looks like for Inverness County. For example, a 1783 census of the communities along the St. John River shows that log houses were constructed alongside frame houses. While log buildings predominate, there were many examples of framed houses as well as framed barns recorded in the census. For example, in Conway, there were 6 log houses, 2 framed houses and 3 framed barns. In contrast, the community of Burton had 28 log houses, 2 framed houses and only 2 framed barns.⁴⁰ An 1858 newspaper account of Yarmouth's history outlines a similar

pattern: "The other division established themselves near their first landing place at the mouth of Perry's Creek on the edge of Chebogue River, extending their habitations along 'the hill', as it was called, from Crocker's Point, before mentioned, to Thomas Perry's residence, immediatly in the rear of which was erected the first framed building ever put up in this Township. They also built six log houses, some of them over the old French cellars before spoken of; and soon afterward two other framed houses were added to the number."⁴¹

Research on log buildings in other areas indicates that many were not temporary, as is often suggested, but were meant to be permanent dwellings. In Ontario and in the United States, for example, log houses were still being constructed in the latter part of the nineteenth century, a time when building materials other than log were amply available.⁴² In Cape Breton Island, log structures continue to be built to the present day. Most are tourist cabins and "bungalows" which may derive from the influence of American tourism on the region in the early years of the twentieth century.

This survey also shows that there were at least two and perhaps more types of log construction. However, Codroy Valley settlers chose one form — horizontal log construction — in their new frontier. The older pattern of using one room for all activities was evident in some of their dwellings. This was a widespread floor plan found in many areas of North America. The Cape Breton Scots did not have a tradition of log building upon arrival in the New World. Their architectural tradition was one of stone, clay or peat.⁴³ Research indicates that neither the English, nor the Irish, who settled Cape Breton at this same period, had a homeland tradition of using log construction.⁴⁴ Yet, numerous reports indicate the Scots did use this construction technique when building their homes. The evidence may indicate independent invention on a frontier environment, or the Cape Breton Scots may have borrowed this building idea from Acadians who were well established on the island by the mid-eighteenth century. The Acadian settlers would have had a widespread knowledge of wood lore. Only with further fieldwork in this region will we be able to test the validity of this conjecture.

Frame Construction

While log architecture was an important part of the mid-nineteenth century Inverness County landscape, so too were frame buildings. It was at this period in the Maritimes that log architecture began to decline. As the century progressed, timber framing and, later, balloon framing, became the predominant form of building in the region. This period was marked by the arrival of cooking and heating stoves that inevitably altered the way people used interior spaces.⁴⁵ As early as 1853, "Franklin stoves" were advertised in Cape Breton newspapers.⁴⁶ No longer did all activity need to centre on the hearth. Consequently, other rooms were now added to the buildings of the region. Through the mid to the late nineteenth century, Inverness County builders adopted a variety of architectural forms which used frame construction techniques.

An autobiographical writer describes a common form of nineteenth century frame dwelling in one Scottish Cape Breton community:

Washabuct houses were in keeping with the life of the people. They were built for utility and not for beauty. They offered few comforts and no modern conveniences. Most of them were storey [storey]-and-a-half frame structures, some whitewashed, usually unfinished on the ground floor except for board partitions and completely unfinished in the attic except for the floor. The largest and principal room was always the kitchen and in it centred all family and most social activities. Some homes had a dining room and most a parlour but these were usually reserved for important events, such as a dance or the visit of the parish priest. A huge, black, crude, wood-burning iron stove on legs, with an ungainly oven perched upon it, dominated the kitchen and served for cooking of meals for the family and feed for the stock, and for heating the house....⁴⁷

This storey-and-a-half frame house, described so well by Neil MacNeil, was one of the more common forms in nineteenth-century Cape Breton. His description indicates a three-room floor plan consisting of a kitchen, dining room and parlour on the first floor with an open sleeping area on the second floor. While first floor space is divided into three rooms, MacNeil hastens to add that it is the kitchen where much of the daily activity occurs. The parlour and dining room are reserved for special occasions. George Henry Murphy, another autobiographical writer, states: "The kitchen in the farm houses of my old neighbourhood was always the best heated and lighted and, in many instances, was as well, the largest room in the house."⁴⁸ Many others have observed this particular social use of space in Atlantic Canadian communities.⁴⁹

MacNeil is a worthy chronicler, since he was born and raised in the community he describes. But is there physical evidence in the landscape of Inverness County to support his verbal description? A visit to the communities from where Codroy Valley emigrants came reveals that examples of the storey-and-a-half frame house exist in each community. Simon Aucoin's house in St. Joseph Du Moine, Margaree Valley, dating from approximately 1850, is a typical example. (Figures 26 and 27). It is built at the base of a mountain overlooking the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Its facade is symmetrical with a three-room floor plan similar to the one described by MacNeil. The kitchen is the largest room taking up more than half of the floorspace. The other two rooms are equal in size dividing the other side of the building in half. There is no evidence the structure ever contained a stone chimney with a fireplace. It dates from after the period when stoves were introduced. The house is made of timbers hewed by an axe or adze along with mortise and tenon construction with wooden pins.

In form, Simon Aucoin's house is similar to the houses using the hall and parlour plan in the Codroy Valley. For example, Aucoin's house has many similarities to the Codroy Valley Doucette house described so well by Howley. Moreover, it has parallels with the John Bruce house, in the Block, Codroy Valley. Both the Aucoin



Figure 26. *Simon Aucoin's house, St. Joseph du Moine.*

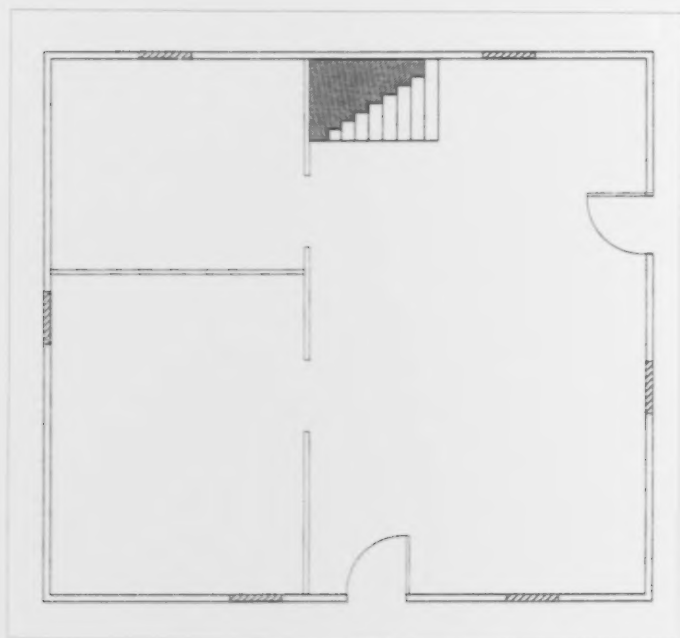


Figure 27.
*Plan, Simon Aucoin's
house, St. Joseph du
Moine.*

and the Bruce houses are situated on or near the Gulf of St. Lawrence, use frame construction and hand hewed timbers, mortise and tenon joints, and have similar dimensions with a three room plan on the ground floor. Myron Stachiw and Nora Pat Small have pointed out that this three-room arrangement was also found in central Massachusetts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵⁰

While Aucoin's house is in an Acadian community, the floorplans for the house of a Scottish settler reveals differences (Figure 28). Alex Ban Chisholm's house in Long Point, Inverness County, is a one-and-one-half storey frame house with a symmetrical facade, similar in appearance to Simon Aucoin's house. The large, central stone chimney dates the house before 1850. His widow registered the property in 1838. Like the Aucoin house, the structure is framed without nails, and uses mortise and tenon, post and beam construction with framing members bolted together with wooden pegs or trunnels. George Henry Murphy describes the work involved in procuring and shaping the materials for frame houses:

Frames of all projected buildings were made during the winter months. Trees of suitable length and thickness were felled with the axe, measured to the requirements of the sills, beams, rafters and studding for the proposed new house or barn, and then hewed with the broadaxe. When finished each unit presented four rectangular surfaces and two squared ends. It was then called a piece of scantling. Tall, smooth black spruce was the usual choice, although hemlock was often used when



Figure 28. Alec Ban Chisholm's house, Long Point.

available, and an older generation of builders hewed their scantling from the primeval pines which, herded with lesser kinds of softwood, were then plentiful in the forest parts of most of the farms.⁵¹

The timbers in the Chisholm home were framed with an adze, hewing-axe or broad-axe. Although it resembles the Aucoin house, it differs in that it has a large, central stone chimney with a fireplace in the dining room and parlour, with a large open hearth in the kitchen, complete with a crane for cooking implements.⁵² The floorplan is also different from the Aucoin house. Instead of entering immediately into the kitchen, one enters the Chisholm house through a small vestibule with doors leading to the kitchen and parlour. Beside the central stone chimney lies a stairway leading to three bedrooms in the upper storey. To the rear of the kitchen is a small pantry; nearby is a door leading to the dining room. A 13 by 12 foot storage shed was added to the side of the kitchen at a later date and a brick chimney added to the interior end wall of this addition. To the rear of the parlour there are two doors; one leads to a small bedroom and the other to the dining room. Similar to the Aucoin house, in the largest room is the kitchen, measuring 12 feet by 20 feet. The parlour is slightly smaller with three rooms across the rear of the house — the bedroom, dining room and pantry. In essence, this floorplan uses a hall-parlour arrangement with three rooms to the rear, a Cape Breton Island variant on the New England Cape Cod house.

While stone chimneys were very common in the early years of the nineteenth century, few still exist in the Cape Breton landscape. C.H. Farnham, a traveller in Cape Breton in 1885, describes the interior of a house he visited while on a walking tour of the Cabot Trail:

After dinner we dragged wearily onward, still toward Smokey, until at sundown we gladly entered a poor man's hut for the night. It was full of inhabitants, of which I can only mention the man and wife with nine small children, three dogs, a hen, and a pet pig. It was a shadowy little place with a cavernous stone chimney, picturesque with pots and kettles hanging from a crane. The few dishes gleamed out of the dimness of a corner cupboard, and the table and the chairs were unmistakably man-made.⁵³

P.J. MacKenzie Campbell, a local historian, describes some remnants of early Cape Breton stone chimneys:

I have seen some very old habitations, but I have never seen, in the district of which I write, any building dating back to the earliest settlement days. I have seen abandoned sites, generally comprising of small excavations littered with piles of stones. I didn't know why there should be so much stone until one day I happened to come across a structure still standing that would remind one of the pyramids of Egypt or of the recently discovered Mayan ruins of Yucatan. Rising

*monumentally from the site of one of those original homes, it was composed of innumerable field stones....*⁵⁴

The stone chimneys remaining in the houses of Inverness County often have the hearths covered with gyproc or wallboard.

The Nova Scotia Highland Village in Iona has moved to its site a one and one-half storey house that contains a kitchen on one side of the central stone chimney and a parlour on the other. Across the rear of the house there are three rooms — a bedroom, dining room and storage room (Figures 29, 30 and 31). Allan MacDonald and his sons John and Norman, emigrants to Cape Breton Island from North Uist, Scotland, built the house in the early 1830s at Stewartdale. It has two fireplaces, one in the parlour and one in the kitchen. It uses heavy frame construction with mortises and tenons. Inside, interesting architectural features include a large, panelled overmantle and decorative geometric patterns etched in the fireplace stone.

My survey, combined with the CIHB survey, indicates that in the areas the Codroy Valley emigrants came from, there are forty-six houses whose main features include: one and one-half storey height, heavy framing using mortise and tenon construction, a central doorway, symmetrical facade and a central or off-centre chimney. I drew these conclusions primarily from front and side view photographs from the CHIB files and from my own fieldwork observations.



Figure 29. Exterior view of the MacDonald's house, Nova Scotia Highland Village, Iona.



Figure 30.
*Interior of MacDonald's
house showing kitchen,
pantry and rear bedroom.*



Figure 31.
*Interior of MacDonald
house showing front room
or parlour.*

Stone Construction

While these types of one and one-half storey houses were commonly built of wood frame construction, during the first period of settlement to the mid-nineteenth century, there are also stone examples of these houses. At least seven stone houses remain in Inverness County: one in Long Point, one in Port Hood, one in Creignish, two in Dunvegan and three in Middle River (Figure 32).⁵⁵ There are three main types of stone buildings. Most are constructed of irregular, uncut stones with mortar fill, and are one and one-half storeys in height with a symmetrical facade (only one — the Port Hood Smith house, the home of a local merchant — is built of coursed cut stone). Two of the seven have gable roofs with two end chimneys, three have gable roofs with off-centre chimneys, and two have hipped roofs with central chimneys.



Figure 32. Exterior, McMaster's house, Creignish.

Scottish settlers built all the houses before 1850 in the first period of Cape Breton settlement. On two of the houses, the McMaster and MacRae houses in Creignish and Middle River respectively, floor plans indicate that the first floor space was divided into a large kitchen and parlour with three small rooms at the rear.⁵⁶

The existence of these stone dwellings in Cape Breton indicates a cultural transfer from the British Isles, but it is ironic that these structures, although built of stone, look more like the region's one and one-half storey frame houses than like Scottish stone buildings.⁵⁷ It appears that Scottish Cape Breton builders of stone houses selectively chose aspects of their building tradition, namely the use of stone as a building material, and constructed their dwellings along the same pattern as the one and one-half storey frame buildings of the region.

By the time of migration to the Codroy Valley, Cape Breton settlers had discovered that stone buildings were cold, unsuited to the climate and labor intensive to build. On the contrary, wood was abundant, cheap and a faster medium to work with. When Cape Breton settlers left for the Codroy Valley, they chose not to use stone to build their homes. Instead, being pragmatic, they used their knowledge of wood construction, perhaps borrowing some ideas from the Acadians, who by the 1850s had already been settled in this territory for two generations.

Post 1850 Architectural Forms

By the end of the nineteenth century other forms began to appear in the Cape Breton landscape. The form most readily accepted by residents is the gable-end



Figure 33. Exterior, Jimmy Hannigan's house, Northeast Margaree.

side-hall plan house (Figure 33). This is comparable in plan to what Glassie calls the two-thirds Georgian house.⁵⁸ Glassie argues that New England builders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries modified the full Georgian house by constructing one-third and two-third portions of this form. This house type was popular in rural and urban regions. Glassie points out that when town builders searched for architectural forms, Georgian subtypes were chosen indicating a traditional element in Mid-Atlantic town planning: "the narrow, deep proportions of the one-third and two-thirds Georgian subtypes made them suited to small lots and crowded situations."⁵⁹ This type of house in Cape Breton differs markedly from the previously discussed houses in this book in that the front door, located in the gable-end of the house, faces the roadway. Adding of classical decoration such as returned eaves, raised cornices and imitation columns and pediments surrounding doors and windows, places greater emphasis on this end of the house. Thomas Hubka argues that builders in New England perfected this form in the early 1800s and that by the 1830s were employing Greek Revival features.⁶⁰ As the century progressed it grew into one of the most common house forms throughout New England: "Its basic form became a standard component of New England housing during the latter half of the nineteenth century."⁶¹ More than 130 houses of this type with gable roofs, gambrel roofs, half-hipped roofs, flat roofs and side additions, all dating from the end of the nineteenth century, are found in the communities of Inverness County where Codroy Valley people came from.

Numerous other forms appeared in the region at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. A few examples of buildings with mansard

roofs still exist, indicating that residents were familiar with the Second Empire style so popular in urban centres in late nineteenth century Canada.⁶² Few dwelling houses display the more elaborate trappings of the Second Empire style, such as bay windows and bracketed eaves, but many do adopt the feature of the mansard roof. The only buildings in Cape Breton Island to adopt wholeheartedly this particular style were institutional buildings such as convents and glebe houses as well as a few merchants' dwellings in urban centres like Sydney.⁶³

Gothic Revival was another architectural style appearing in this region after the mid-nineteenth century (Figure 34). In Cape Breton Island this style manifests itself through the use of a steep, triangular dormer cutting the roofline in the centre of the facade. In most cases, this central dormer was merely an addition to the one and one-half storey structures of the region. Promoted by architectural reformers, the style was thought to symbolize "a Christian form of private dwelling."⁶⁴

These post mid-nineteenth century architectural styles arrived in Cape Breton Island after the majority of Codroy Valley bound families had left. Nevertheless, these forms are important to discuss for some appear in the Codroy Valley at the same time as their appearance in Cape Breton Island. For example, the two-third's Georgian plan and the Gothic Revival entered the Codroy Valley repertoire at about the same time as their appearance in Cape Breton Island. Their appearance in the Codroy Valley may be a part of a wider Atlantic Canadian regional pattern evident during the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.



Figure 34. Jim St. Clair's house, Mull River.

The Codroy Village Antecedent Area

While the architecture of Inverness County, Cape Breton exerted a major influence on the Codroy Valley, another antecedent area — the coastal fishing village of Codroy — also influenced the architecture of the Codroy Valley. As we have already shown, the village of Codroy was populated mainly by English settlers who had lived in south-western Newfoundland for more than a generation by the time the Cape Bretoners arrived. The community is different from that of the Codroy Valley. It is primarily a fishing community with all the associated material culture of this enterprise. The population is mainly Protestant in contrast to the predominant Roman Catholic population of the Codroy Valley, and the settlement pattern is similar to that found in much of Newfoundland: housing and fishing buildings are nestled along the coast for easy access to the fishery.

A survey of buildings in Codroy village reveals that the hall-parlour plan evident in the Codroy Valley is also a common feature of the architectural landscape of Codroy village. For example, Thomas Harding's one and one-half storey house, has a central door and symmetrical facade with a hall-parlour plan, complete with a back addition containing storage rooms (Figure 35). Constructed in the 1870s, it is similar to the many one and one-half storey frame houses of the Codroy Valley. English families such as Samms, Moore, Gallop and Kendall owned other houses of this type still standing in the village.



Figure 35. Thomas Harding's house, Codroy Village.

Another important aspect of Codroy village's architecture is the prevalence of selected features of the Gothic Revival style. As with the Codroy Valley, a number of houses have incorporated a central dormer with a pointed Gothic arch on the facade. This is one of the few features of this nineteenth century style readily accepted by the residents. Houses owned by families such as Moore, Evans, Harding and Kendall possess this feature. Residents merely added this feature to the already established one and one-half storey hall-parlour house type. The Kendall house in Woodville is an interesting example of a local modification of the gothic revival form (Figure 36). Originally constructed in the 1870s with a gable roof and a gothic central peak in the facade, this building was modified to turn the gable into a gambrel on both the roof and the central front dormer. There are two other local examples of this kind in the village: John Samms' house built in 1872 and Reubin Kendall's built in 1875.

Codroy village, an important commercial fishing centre since at least the eighteenth century, may have been an entry point for some of the Codroy Valley's architectural ideas. The English settlers of the district would have been experienced with frame construction techniques and with the hall-parlour house plan by the time Cape Bretoners migrated to the Codroy Valley. Likewise, the port, being well visited



Figure 36. Kendall's house, Woodville.

and connected to other important centres in eastern Newfoundland and beyond, may also have been a source for the Gothic Revival's entry into the Codroy Valley.

So my research has shown that Inverness County possessed a log building tradition at the time of migration to the Codroy Valley. This tradition was carried to the Codroy Valley and can still be observed in many outbuildings and barns of the district. This horizontal log construction may have been borrowed from a New England building tradition, or may be an example of independent invention in a pioneer landscape. Cape Breton Island also had well built frame and stone buildings at this time. The stone building tradition was not carried to the Codroy Valley, because Cape Breton settlers had learned how to work with the abundant supply of wood in the district.

In the mid-nineteenth century, when Cape Bretoners were migrating to the Codroy Valley, there were several floor plan types and at least three methods of construction — log, frame and stone — which would have been known to the Scottish, Irish, and French Acadian farmers of Inverness County.

As the nineteenth century progressed, Codroy Valley farms became more commercial. At the same time, East Coast politicians began to notice the Codroy Valley, and indeed, the entire West Coast of Newfoundland. Thus, in 1867, Alexander Murray was sent out to conduct a geological survey of the region. Like many observers before him, he was impressed with the agricultural productivity of the area.⁶⁵ Murray describes what he saw: "The islands and flats of the lower parts of the Great Codroy River yield a luxuriant growth of wild grass, affording an ample supply of admirable fodder for cattle....Up the Great Codroy River, which is more or less occupied on either side of the estuary, the calling of the inhabitants appears to be more nearly purely agricultural and it may be fairly stated that, notwithstanding the very rude process by which the land is cultivated, the crops produced of grass, grain and oats, highly testify to the excellence of the soil in which they grow. Cattle and sheep are raised upon most of these small farms producing most excellent beef and mutton, besides dairy products of the very best description."⁶⁶

By 1869, outside individuals were applying for mining leases in the Codroy Valley district. In 1874, according to the Roman Catholic Archbishop Howley, there were one hundred families comprising nine hundred individuals living in this region. He states in a letter to Governor Stephen J. Hill "that all these with the exception of twelve families live up the country on the banks of the rivers."⁶⁷ In this same letter Howley argues that the majority of Codroy Valley settlers live beyond the half mile shore limit and cannot be considered to be inhabitants of "the French Shore" — the name applied to the southwestern coast of Newfoundland until the ownership of this territory was finally decided in 1904.⁶⁸

By this time Codroy Valley residents, led by the local clergyman, Rev. Thomas Sears, began petitioning the government for improved education, steam communication, mail service, government representation, the right to obtain grants for the land which they occupied, and roads for the valley.⁶⁹ One petition, in 1871, states that even with no local mercantile establishment, no connecting roads to the

nearby port of Channel, and with very poor access to markets via the River (because of the difficulty in navigating the shallow river mouth), Codroy Valley farmers' dealings in Channel amounted to more than 50,000 pounds in 1870.⁷⁰

At the pioneer stage the farm community relied upon the familiar, the architectural patterns and materials known and used in Cape Breton and the architectural forms worked out by the English settlers from Codroy Village. But as the economic stability of the area increased throughout the 1860s, 70s and 80s, newer architectural patterns became accepted. No longer were residents satisfied with the older ways of building, but were instead interested in more modern houses. They began looking outward for international architectural fashion. By the 1870s, with the arrival of a permanent clergyman, outsiders began to show interest in the region, developing a commercial farm system, and establishing closer connections with the political centre of Newfoundland — St. John's. With the increased contact, new architectural ideas were also being introduced to the Valley.

Notes

1. Much of the research on architecture at the Fortress of Louisbourg remains unpublished in the form of site reports; these can be examined at the Fortress of Louisbourg Archives. For examples of some of the published material see: *Contributions from the Fortress of Louisbourg*, Occasional papers in Archaeology and History, No. 2 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National Historical Sites Service, 1971); *Contributions from the Fortress of Louisbourg*, Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, No. 12 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National Historic Sites Service, 1975); University Press, 1979). For work done on architecture history of the rest of the island see: Mary Kay MacLeod and James St. Clair, *No Place Like Home: The Life and Times of Cape Breton Heritage Houses* (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1992); Mary Kay MacLeod and James St. Clair, *Pride of Place: the Life and Times of Cape Breton Heritage Houses* (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1994); Debra McNabb and Lewis Parker, *Old Sydney Town: Historic Buildings of the North End* (Sydney: Old Sydney Society, 1986).
2. This historical description is from: Stephen Hornsby, "Scottish Emigration and Settlement in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Breton," in *The Island: New Perspectives on Cape Breton History 1713–1990*, ed. Ken Donovan (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1990), p. 49. See Stephen Hornsby, *Nineteenth Century Cape Breton: An Historical Geography*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press)
3. R.G. Haliburton, "Appendix H: Inverness County, 1861," in *Uniacke's Sketches of Cape Breton*, ed. C. Bruce Fergusson (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1958), p. 158.
4. Haliburton, p. 160.
5. Haliburton, p. 162.

6. John F. Hart, *History of Northeast Margaree* (Margaree Centre: Published by the Author, 1962), p. 12.
7. Harold Shurtleff, *The Log Cabin Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939).
8. *MacTalla*, Vol 3, No. 1, 1894, p. 1. Thanks are offered to Kay MacDonald, former Gaelic specialist at the Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton, for this translation from Gaelic to English.
9. Augustus Wallet Desbarres, *A Description of the Island of Cape Breton in North America; including a Brief and Accurate Account of its Constitution, Laws and Government* (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1818), n.p. Excerpts from this work are reprinted in : *Impressions of Cape Breton*, ed. Brian Tennyson (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1986), pp. 73–86; for this particular citation see pp. 82–83.
10. Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie, "Building In Wood in the Eastern United States," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 177; Alan Gowans, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 6.
11. Donald A. Hutslar, *The Log Architecture of Ohio* (Columbus: The Ohio Historical Society, 1977), p. 1; Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, Vol.1 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, (1984), p.41; Terry Jordan, *Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1978), p. 23. See also: Terry G. Jordan and Matti Kaups, *The American Backwoods Frontier: An Ethnic and Ecological Interpretation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).
12. Warren Roberts, *Log Buildings of Southern Indiana* (Bloomington: Trickster Press, 1984), p. 33.
13. Roberts, pp. 33–34.
14. Roberts, p. 34.
15. Haliburton, p. 65.
16. While doing fieldwork in Cape Breton Island, I found numerous examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings using birch bark as insulation. While the insulating powers of birchbark might be minimal by today's standards, a layer of bark underneath shingles or clapboard served to help keep wind and water from entering a dwelling.
17. W.F. Ganong, "Historical — Geographical Documents Relating to New Brunswick," *New Brunswick Historical Society*, 2, No. 6 (1895), p. 368. Ganong reprints the journal of Gamaliel Smethurst which relates the narrative of his journey from Nepisiguit to Fort Cumberland in 1761. This narrative was originally published as: Gamaliel Smethurst, *A Narrative of An Extraordinary Escape out of the Hands of the Indians in the Gulph [sic] of St. Lawrence* (London: Printed for the author and sold by J. Bew, 1774).
18. Kniffen and Glassie, "Building In Wood," p. 172.
19. *Highland Village Day: 1962–1986* (Iona: Highland Village Society, 1986), n.p.

20. Brian Preston, Provincial archaeologist for the province of Nova Scotia, brought one log building in Alba to my attention and Professor James St. Clair, University College of Cape Breton and President, Nova Scotia Highland Village, informed me of another in Marble Mountain. See my article: Richard P. MacKinnon, "Log Architecture on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia: Cultural Borrowing and Adaptation," *Material Culture*, 24 (1992), 1-17.
21. It is difficult to date this dwelling, but the property is referred to in some public documents by the mid-nineteenth century. The original grantee, Alexander McEachern purchased 100 acres from the government by 1859 and received grants of 200 acres of adjacent land in 1867 and 1868. Born in 1818 in Scotland, he was a son of Hugh McEachern (1744-1842), one of the pioneer settlers in Alba who migrated to Cape Breton in 1828. By 1864 Alexander was way office keeper, by 1871 a Justice of the Peace, and by 1881, the operator of the post office. He resigned in 1896 and the Cassells family succeeded to the property in 1901. This family consisted of Alexander, Lockhart and Mary, all unmarried. An adopted daughter of the Cassells married Lauchlan MacRitchie and the MacRitchies succeeded in the occupancy of the property. By the 1940s Mary had died and the property was abandoned in 1970 when Lauchlan MacRitchie was placed in an old people's home by his adopted son, George MacRitchie, who is now the non-resident owner. This history of the property was graciously provided by Brian Preston, provincial archaeologist for the province of Nova Scotia, who has a summer home in Alba and has been researching the history of settlement of this district.
22. Père Anselme Chiasson, *Chéticamp Histoire et Traditions* (Moncton: Éditions des Aboiteaux, 1962), p. 46.
23. Kniffen and Glassie, "Building In Wood," p.165; for a description of this technology as it exists elsewhere see: Peter N. Moogk, *Building a House in New France* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), pp. 22-30; George Gauthier-Larouche, *Evolution de la maison rurale traditionnelle dans la région de Québec* (Quebec: Laval University Press, 1974).
24. John I. Rempel, *Building With Wood and Other Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Building in Central Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 15, 19, 148.
25. Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie, "Building With Wood," p. 165.
26. Cécile Chevrier, *Les Défricheurs D'eau*, Village Historique Acadien Publication No. 1 (Caraquet: Village Historique Acadien, 1978), pp. 16, 24, 40-49; Paul Doucet, *Vie de nos ancêtres en Acadie, L'habitat et le mobilier* (Moncton: Fondation d'Etudes du Canada Ministère de l'Education du Nouveau-Brunswick, 1980), pp. 3-22.
27. *Impressions of Cape Breton*, ed. Brian Tennyson (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1986), p. 68.
28. Kniffen and Glassie, "Building in Wood," p. 163.
29. Kniffen and Glassie, "Building in Wood," p. 165.

30. Eleanor Huntington, Cape Breton's Oldest House: A Link With the Past, Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton, Scrapbook 67, p. 37.
31. Kniffen and Glassie, "Building in Wood," p.164; Andrew Hill Clark, *Acadie* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p.105.
32. See Charles Peterson, "French Houses of the Illinois Country," *Missouriana*, 1, No. 1 (1938), 9-12; Shane O'Dea, "The Tilt: Vertical Log Construction in Newfoundland," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Camille Wells (Annapolis: Vernacular Architecture Forum, 1982), pp. 55-64; Shane O'Dea, "A Selective Annotated Bibliography for the Study of Newfoundland Vertical-Log Structures With Some Comments on Terminology," *Bulletin, The Association for Preservation Technology*, 13 (1981), 35-37.
33. Chiasson, p.46. This passage was translated by Brenda Sampson, French teacher, Sydney, Nova Scotia.
34. Robert Hale, "Journal of a Voyage To Nova Scotia Made in 1731 by Robert Hale of Beverly," *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute*, 42, (1906), 233-34.
35. "Les Vieilles Maisons Acadiennes," *Vint-cinquième Cahier*, 3, (1967), 185.
36. Margaret MacPhail, *Loch Bras D'Or* (Windsor: Lancelot Press, 1970), pp. 9-10.
37. Henry Glassie, "Types of the Southern Mountain Cabin," in *The Study of American Folklore*, ed. Jan Harold Brunvand, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), pp.529-62; Norman Morrison Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Connecticut Houses; An Historical and Architectural Study* (1900; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1965), p. 150; Bernard L. Herman, *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware 1700-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), pp. 15-20; Norman Morison Isham, *Early American Houses the Seventeenth Century* (1928; rpt. Watkins Glen, New York: American Life Foundation, 1968) pp. 3-10.
38. Laurie Stanley, *The Well-Watered Garden: The Presbyterian Church in Cape Breton Island, 1798-1860* (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1983), pp. 22-23; the diary of Reverend Murdock Stewart is found at the Provincial Archives of Nova Scotia: PANS, MG1, 1471 A.
39. Frederic S. Cozzens, *Acadia or a Month with the Blue Noses* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859), p. 55.
40. "Sunbury County Documents," *New Brunswick Historical Society*, 1 (1894), pp. 100-118.
41. Dr. Farish, "Recollections of Yarmouth," *The Yarmouth Herald*, 8 July 1858, p.1
42. Rempel, *Building With Wood*; Roberts, *Log Buildings*.
43. See: Alexander Fenton and Bruce Walker, *The Rural Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981); Colin Sinclair, *The Thatched Houses of the Old Highlands* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1953); Ross Noble, "Turf-Walled Houses of the Central Highlands: An Experiment in Reconstruction," *Folk Life*, 22 (1983-84), 68-83; Alexander Fenton, "Alternating Stone and Turf: An Obsolete Building Practice," *Folk Life*, 6 (1968), 94-103; N.G. Allen, "Walling Materials in the Eighteenth Century Highlands," *Vernacular Building: Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group Newsletter*, 5

- (1979), 1-7. A nineteenth century account describes a late eighteenth century Scottish land surveyor who settled in St. John, New Brunswick: "At the close of the revolution, in 1783, he [Dugald Campbell] came to New Brunswick with the loyalists in charge of a number of disbanded men of the forty-second regiment. Their lots were on the south side of Union Street, running eastward from the Golden Ball Corner. On these they built log houses and attempted to establish homes, but the following summer their rude dwellings were destroyed in a disastrous conflagration that swept over that portion of the newly built city, and the Highlanders abandoned St. John...." "Dugald Campbell's Map," *The New Brunswick Magazine*, 2, No. 5 (1899), 235.
44. See John J. Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation*, University of Toronto Geography Research Publications, No. 12 (Toronto: Published for the University of Toronto Department of Geography by the University of Toronto Press, 1974); Barry Harrison and Barbara Hutton, *Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire and Cleveland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984); Alan Gailey, *Rural Houses of the North of Ireland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984).
 45. Ennals, "Legacy," 10.
 46. *Cape Breton News*, 13 August 1853, p.3.
 47. Neil MacNeil, *The Highland Heart in Nova Scotia* (Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company, 1948), pp. 21-22.
 48. George Henry Murphy, *Wood, Hay and Stubble* (Antigonish: Casket Printing and Publishing, 1956), p.105.
 49. Gerald L. Pocius, "Calvert: A Study of Artifacts and Spatial Usage in a New-foundland Community," PhD. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1979; Ennals, 10.
 50. Myron Stachiw and Nora Pat Small, "Tradition and Transformation: Rural Society and Architectural Change in Nineteenth-century Central Massachusetts," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III*, ed. Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbus: University of Missouri Press, 1989), p. 136.
 51. Murphy, p. 107.
 52. Ann Sherrington, "Old Houses Part of Inverness Historical Heritage," *Scotia Sun*, 1 February 1984, p. 2.
 53. C.H. Farnham, "Cape Breton Folk," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 72 (December 1885 - May, 1886), p. 608.
 54. Peter J. MacKenzie Campbell, *Highland Community on the Bras D'Or* (Antigonish: Casket, 1978), p. 31.
 55. Elizabeth Beaton Planetta, "Stone Houses Built in Cape Breton by Highland Scottish Immigrants," in *Dimensions of Canadian Architecture*, pp. 1-7. For other references to stone buildings see: John L. MacDougall, *History of Inverness County* (Truro: News Publishing Company, 1922), p. 37. MacDougall cites a letter from Bishop MacEachern to Bishop Plessis describing MacEachern's first official visit to Cape Breton in 1823: "Here are no roads fit for horses in the most of said districts, except on the Judique shore. There is a church in

- Broad Cove, one in Mabou, one in Judique, one on River Inhabitants, and the Catholics of Port Hood talk of erecting one with stones", (p. 37).
56. Beaton Planetta, p.6.
 57. For examples of Scottish Highland dwellings see: Alexander Fenton and Bruce Walker, *The Rural Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981); Colin Sinclair, *The Thatched Houses of the Old Highlands* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1953); Robert J. Naismith, *Buildings of the Scottish Countryside* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1985).
 58. Henry Glassie coined this term. See his "Eighteenth Century Cultural Process in Delaware Valley Folk Building," in *Common Places*, pp. 400–404.
 59. Glassie, "Eighteenth Century," p. 403. Allan Noble, following from Glassie, argues that this form grew in popularity because it allowed owners to build dwellings on narrower and less-expensive lots: Noble, *Wood, Brick and Stone*, p. 106.
 60. Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn*, p. 38.
 61. Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House Barn*, p. 39.
 62. Christina Cameron and Janet Wright, *Second Empire Style in Canadian Architecture*, Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, No. 24 (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1980).
 63. A survey of some of Sydney's buildings shows that characteristics of the Second Empire style appeared on an Attorney General's house, a Congregation of Notre Dame convent, and a well known judge's house. See McNabb and Parker, *Old Sydney Town* pp. 38–39, 58–59, 68–69. Another survey of Cape Breton shows the house of a wealthy merchant and a hotel possessing the characteristics of this style. See: Sunderland, *Still Standing*, n.p.
 64. Nathalie Clerk, *Palladian Style in Canadian Architecture*, Studies in Archaeology, Architecture and History (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, 1984), p. 19.
 65. Alexander Murray, Preliminary Report of Alexander Murray, Esq., on his Geological Survey of 1867, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1867, Appendix, pp. 851–55. Murray, p. 855.
 66. Alexander Murray, Preliminary Report of Alexander Murray, Esq., on his Geological Survey of 1867, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1867, Appendix, p. 855.
 67. Letter to Governor Stephen J. Hill, from Archbishop M.E. Howley, October 2, 1874. PAN GN 1/3 /A 12/1874, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.
 68. Letter to Governor Stephen J. Hill.
 69. *Terra Nova Advocate*, 14 February 1882. rev. Thomas Sears was the Prefect of St. George's District from 1868 to 1885. By 1882 Father Sears was elevated to the position of Monsignor: "Father Sears has been made the recipient by the holy father Leo XIII...of the honorary society of a prelate of the church and the title Monsignor with its accompanying rights and priveleges....It is now nearly 14 years since the Monsignor Sears (in November 1868) first set foot

on these shores, as Missionary Apostolic to what was called the French Shore." *Newfoundlander*, February 10, 1882. See also *Newfoundlander*, February 10, 1882. Petitions were sent from the Codroy Valley to the government in St. John's throughout the 1870s and 80s. For examples of some of these petitions see: *Newfoundlander*, 18 December, 1868; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1873, p. 83; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1873, p. 49; *Public Ledger*, 15 March 1877; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1880, p. 19; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1881, p. 111; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1883, Appendix 478.

70. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1871, p. 29. This petition asks for a voice in the legislature, help in the development of schools, the right to obtain grants of land, and assistance for constructing roads. In requesting assistance for roads, the petitioner, Michael Druing, states: together with many other inconveniences, often does it happen that, after having slaughtered an animal, a storm setting in, the flesh would become tainted before they could dare venture out to take it to market...." *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1871, p. 30.

CHAPTER 4

The Arrival of International Fashion: 1880–1920



On June 30, 1983, Neil McIsaac and I visited Bernie Benoit in his yard in Doyle's, Codroy Valley. He answered questions about his home and described older folkways once practiced by the region's builders. After explaining that the wood used in the frame was cut by his uncle Wallace Benoit and brought to a local sawmill in 1919, he mentioned that house builders in the past often cut wood by the moon. The best days for cutting were the three days before the end of an old moon or the three days on a new moon because, at these times, the sap was believed to be down in the roots. This produced wood that quickly dried and did not warp. He said this practice was something the "older people did" and is no longer a part of the Codroy Valley building tradition. His house now serves the dual function of a credit union and dwelling house. He took us inside and let us measure and photograph the kitchen, parlour, pantry, porch and entrance hallway.

What is interesting about this house is that, at the time of its initial construction, it was deemed modern, not the kind of old-fashioned house built by the district's first generations of settlers. Its gable faces the road, different from many of the houses built in the mid-nineteenth century. Its floor plan possesses a main entrance on one side of the gable with a hallway and two rooms back to back off the hall, called in architectural studies, the "two-thirds Georgian" plan. From the latter end of the nineteenth century until well into the early 1920s, a number of new architectural ideas emerged in the Codroy Valley. Bernie Benoit's house is only one of many examples of the arrival of international fashion to this largely rural district in southwestern Newfoundland.

I wanted to learn more about international architectural fashions that appeared in the Codroy Valley in the late nineteenth century and continued until the 1920s. By international architectural fashion, I mean architectural styles created and developed by architects and designers for a wide audience; an audience that may not even be from the region or country where the style appears. These styles have often moved beyond regional and national boundaries to enter many local building repertoires, including that of the Codroy Valley. In the United States by the mid-nineteenth century, designers such as Andrew Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux led an architectural reform movement. They, and many others, published plan books, pattern books, and builders' guides by the dozens, providing the general public with an image of what the ideal American family home should be, and also offering small communities new fashions in architecture.¹ Likewise, Bernard Herman describes how New Castle County, Delaware houses underwent a major phase of rebuilding from 1820 to 1870. The modifications reveal changes in the organization of the household and the world view of the region's residents.² At this time, new architectural ideas emerged throughout North America, ideas that influenced many regions in many

ways. Some of these modern international fashions came to the Codroy valley once the farming community was firmly established in the late nineteenth century.

Why is it important to understand the degree to which international architectural fashion influences a region? For one, it can tell much about people's values and attitudes. For example, total acceptance of newer forms and the rejection of the traditional building repertoire may indicate a concern with status and the use of the house as a symbol of material success. On the contrary, if these international ideas have minimal influence on a region, there may be reasons why members of the community have consciously rejected these forms. On another level, an assessment of international fashion also shows how popular culture affects the vernacular culture of remote districts. These international styles and how they influence a region can reveal much about how the traditional way of building is altered and varied. Just as folksong scholars must examine other folk and popular printed song collections to understand variation, vernacular architecture scholars need to understand the influence of international styles. This influence may show how a community perceives itself and portrays itself to the outside world. For these reasons, it is important to examine the international fashions of the Codroy Valley.

One international type, the two-thirds Georgian house with a main entrance off to one side on an end gable, is said to have emerged in North America by the 1830s.³ The design grew largely from the late eighteenth century interest in classical forms which promoted the architectural style called "classical revival," so popular in religious, public and domestic buildings from the 1820s until the 1860s.⁴ Thomas Hubka points out that New England farmers readily accepted this form into their



Figure 37.
Map of 2/3rds Georgian
plan houses.

building repertoire after the 1830s, at a time when there was considerable reorganization of space on New England farms.⁵ Moreover, he argues the primary appeal of the classical movement to Americans was nationalistic. This architectural style became a symbol of the new American republic that was building a nation based on classical ideals: "The image of Greece and Rome became a symbol of progress...."⁶

In the Maritimes this two-thirds Georgian form was popular from the 1830s until the 1860s.⁷ In Cape Breton Island, particularly in the source areas for Codroy Valley migration, this form was popular at a later period — from the 1870s to the turn of the century.⁸ Showing its wholehearted acceptance by the turn of the twentieth century, the Dominion Steel and Coal Company chose this form for many of its single family company houses in Cape Breton's industrial communities.⁹ In the Codroy Valley this type prevailed from the 1880s until the early years of the twentieth century. All existing Codroy Valley examples have extremely shallow pitched roofs, common in a number of building types at the turn of the twentieth century (Figure 37).¹⁰

Moses Burns' house is one example (Figures 38 and 39). Situated in the area known as the Block, the structure is 21 by 31 feet, and was constructed in 1902. The front door is on the gable side of the house and enters into a hallway with a door opening to the parlour; at the end of the hallway is the entrance to the kitchen. The ground floor consists of a kitchen and parlour. The stairwell is located in the front hallway and underneath the stairwell is an entrance to the root cellar. The



Figure 38. Moses Burns' house, the Block.

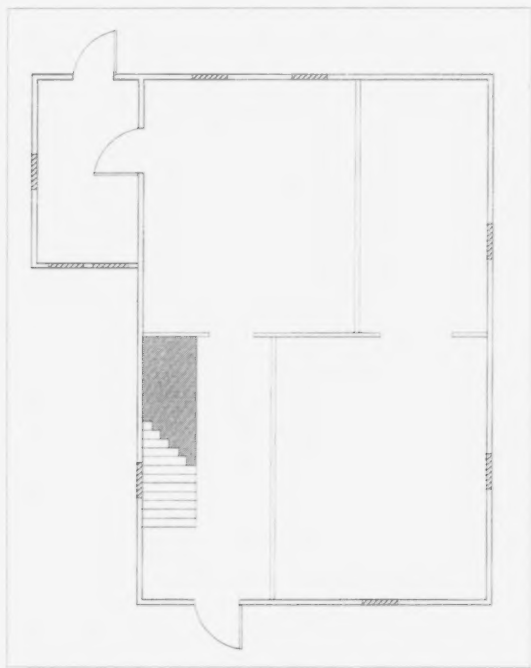


Figure 39.
Floorplan, Moses Burns' house.

building had a fieldstone foundation and now it sits on a concrete one. Originally the upstairs area was divided into six small bedrooms. Now it contains five rooms. The shallow pitch of the gable roof hints at a classical pediment. Other distinct features include a brightly painted paneled front door, an imported stained glass window, and a tongue and groove Douglas Fir ceiling throughout. Shingles lie over horizontal sheathing with a layer of birchbark between the two — a common moisture shield and insulation barrier in nineteenth century Codroy Valley buildings. Its upright studs are all hand hewed and were visible in the summer of 1982 when the present owner, George Anderson, was re-sheathing and shingling the house.

Most houses of this type in the Codroy Valley have additions constructed at the side of the dwelling. Norman McIsaac's house in Upper Ferry is an example of this form with an addition to the side (Figure 40). It took three years to construct this 29 by 31 foot dwelling (without the addition it is 21 feet wide) at the turn of the twentieth century. Originally owned by Sandy McArthur, it was bought by Bertram Downey in the 1920s and sold to Angus McIsaac — Norman's father — in 1931. Its floor plan is similar to Burns' plan except that there is a small bedroom that was originally a dining room next to the kitchen. The addition makes room for a porch, storage room and small bathroom. Initially there were five bedrooms in the upstairs but the interior walls have been gutted as Norman is preparing to cut the roof down to make a one storey house. Because of the removal of the upstairs walls and sheathing, one can readily see construction details. Nine upright studs go



Figure 40. Norman McIsaac's house, Upper Ferry.

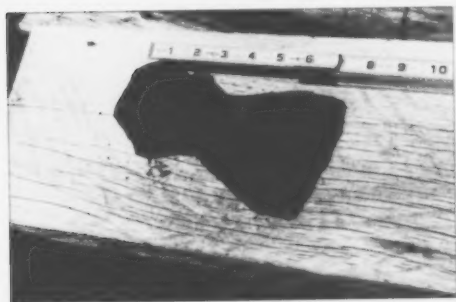


Figure 41. Hewing axe.



Figure 42. Mortise and tenon joints, Doyles.

from the bottom sills to the top plates on the north and south sides, while there are eleven studs in the sills on the east and west sides of the house. The marks of the hewing axe are clearly visible on the squared and hand-hewed studs (Figure 41). On average, these studs are 4 by 5 inches in diameter and are mortised and tenoned into the bottom sill and top plate. They are held together by wooden pins, a typical feature of earlier Codroy Valley buildings (Figure 42). The bottom sill sits on a field-stone foundation and there is a small root cellar under the kitchen, which can



Figure 43.
Waterloo stove in Ned
Gale's house, South
Branch.

be reached through a hatch in the kitchen floor. There are two chimneys, one situated in the parlour and the other in the bedroom off the kitchen. The house is heated by wood stoves; Norman remembers using "Waterloo" and "Perfection" wood stoves that can still be seen in some Codroy Valley houses (Figure 43).¹¹

Other examples include Sandy McIsaac's, Doyles; Mike Tompkins, Tompkins; Maggie MacKinnon's, O'Regans, (Figure 44); Angus McIsaac's, South Branch; Dan Martin's, Millville; Bernie Benoit's, Doyles; Mary Ona McIsaac's, St. Andrews; Rose MacDonald's, St. Andrews; Brendan Doyle's, St. Andrews; and James Dolan's, O'Regans.



Figure 44. *Maggie MacKinnon's house, O'Regan's.*

While many of the buildings of this type were constructed from the 1880s to the turn of twentieth century, some continued to use this form until the 1950s. For example, Rose MacDonald's house, built in 1952 in St. Andrews, is a variation of this two-thirds Georgian plan (Figure 45). The front door leads from a porch immediately into the parlour; there is no hallway in this plan (Figure 46). There are only two main rooms on the ground floor — the parlour at the front of the house and a kitchen at the rear; a small bathroom is placed off the parlour. A



Figure 45. *Rose MacDonald's house, St. Andrews.*

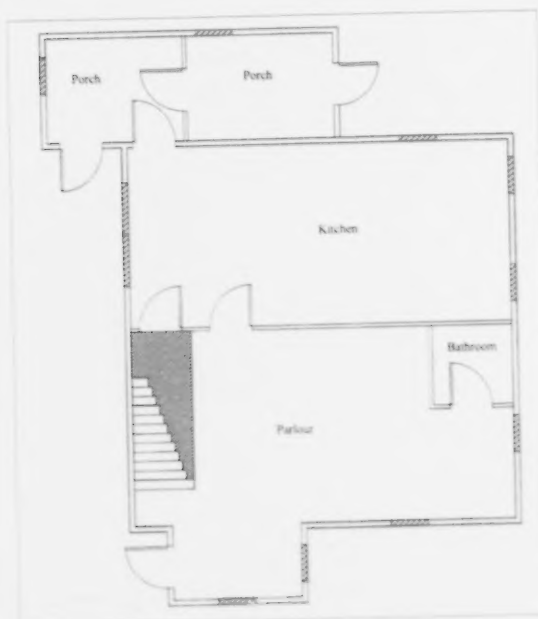


Figure 46.
Floorplan, Rose MacDonald's house.

back porch divided into two rooms is attached to the rear of the house. The most distinct feature of the house is the roof that is unlike any other roof in the region (Figure 45). The roof has a 45-degree slope that is continued on the back porch addition. The builder, Bill MacDonald, constructed the roof in this way to protect the dwelling from the high winds blowing down from the Long Range Mountains into St. Andrews and the other communities along the Little River. Although a practical innovation, it was not adopted by other builders in the area.

As the nineteenth century progressed, Codroy Valley farms became more commercial. A new architectural idea, the two-thirds Georgian plan, was introduced as better economic circumstances came about because of the sale of cattle and produce. This plan introduced into New England by 1830, and becoming familiar to builders in the Maritimes by the 1850s and 60s, did not appear in the Codroy Valley until the 1880s and 90s. By the turn of the twentieth century it was viewed as a modern house type of the region. People were travelling more because of the introduction of the railroad, which may account for one way this idea was introduced. Many Codroy valley men and women migrated to the eastern United States and to Cape Breton Island to find gainful work. Moreover, there was also a late nineteenth century migration from rural Cape Breton. Some of these migrants came from communities such as the Margaree Valley where this side-hall plan had already been accepted. This travelling to and from the Codroy Valley and Cape Breton Island occurred frequently at the turn of the twentieth century because of massive mining and steel developments in the Cape Breton Industrial communities. Codroy Valley men would work in the mines and steel mill in winter and return to the Codroy Valley in the summer months. Codroy Valley residents did not accept this plan without changes. They modified it to suit their own needs. A form of side-hall plan with a side addition became very common in the Codroy Valley at this period. Some residents saw the need for more kitchen space than the two-third's Georgian plan provided. Thus, the side addition was often another kitchen or an extension of the existing kitchen. Others used this addition for new bathrooms and porches.

There are two possible sources for the diffusion of this architectural idea to the Codroy Valley. Developed in New England, the two-thirds Georgian plan may have spread throughout Nova Scotia, to Cape Breton Island and then to the Codroy Valley. Continued communication between Codroy Valley and Cape Breton Island could have made Codroy Valley residents familiar with this plan. The other possible route of migration is from St. John's, Newfoundland via the coastal fishing village of Codroy. By this late nineteenth century, commercial links between St. John's, south coast communities and the village of Codroy were well established and steamer connections linked many Newfoundland communities.

Throughout the 1870s, 80s and 90s, the Codroy Valley continued to develop as a farming district. Newspaper accounts abound praising the fine farming and cattle raising:

We understand that about 40 head of cattle and some sheep, natives of Codroy have just been shipped there for this market — the first shipment of the season

from that quarter. Last years lots of oxen from Codroy were of most superior description and, we believe, realized excellent prices. We are informed that the coming arrivals are quite good, if not better still, and will reflect high credit of the Codroy Valley some of the richest land of the country. As these mark the first adventure of the settlers of that soil, we do hope they will find prices that may offer encouragement for further and frequent supplies.¹²

The 1890s to the early years of the twentieth century were a time of hope for Codroy Valley residents. The railroad pushed through the valley in 1898, opening new markets for Codroy Valley agricultural goods and bringing the outside world to the district. Carloads of cattle could now be shipped to St. John's, fetching fine prices on the wharves of the capital city. New technologies made their way to the farm. Harvesting machinery in the form of mowing machines, rakes, and horse-drawn balers was introduced to the district. Newspaper accounts point to the improvements accomplished by this technology.¹³ The railroad and the concomitant sport fishing industry brought many jobs to the region. In summer, wealthy tourists from other parts of Newfoundland, Canada and the United States paid high wages to Codroy Valley men to guide them to the many salmon pools along the rivers. In winter, some of these tourists came back to hunt moose and caribou in the Long Range and Anguille Mountains. Locals established hotels and cabins to accommodate the tourists and, to this day, this industry provides employment for Codroy Valley residents.

It was at this time of prosperity that a new house type emerged: the full two storey "biscuit box," "bawn" or "hatch roof" type, as it is known in other areas of Newfoundland and the Maritimes (Figure 47).¹⁴ A two storey, rectangular building



Figure 47.
Map showing the location of two storey, Biscuit Box houses in the Codroy Valley.

with a central front door, symmetrical facade and five windows in the front emerged by 1900 and continued to be constructed until the 1950s. Mills, in his study of Trinity Bay architecture, argues that this type developed in an evolutionary manner: "The style... was not widely accepted until c. 1900 and is clearly a structural development from the third generation form."¹⁵ Its appearance in the Codroy Valley cannot be explained as an evolutionary development from previous Codroy Valley forms, however. It clearly departs in size, plan and even construction methods, from earlier Codroy Valley types. It was popular throughout the Maritimes at this same period in rural, urban and coastal communities.¹⁶ In Cape Breton Island, this form appears throughout Inverness County, as well as in the industrial communities of Sydney, Glace Bay and New Waterford.

Martin Devoe's house in Upper Ferry is an ornate example of this form (Figure 48). According to oral tradition, Dan MacNeil and Jim Angus McIsaac — two well known Codroy Valley carpenters — built it in 1918 for Charles Martin.¹⁷ The date is verifiable in that it is remembered as the year Martin Devoe's brother Bill was killed overseas in the First World War. The innovation on previous Codroy Valley plans was the introduction of the central hallway and the creation of more rooms on the ground floor. The floor plan consists of two parlours, a dining room, storage room, small bedroom, a pantry and a large kitchen. In size it is 25 x 31 feet. A 6-foot back addition was constructed in 1972 to make a larger kitchen and to add a porch. One of the reasons for the large kitchen is that Martin Devoe was a



Figure 48. Martin Devoe's house, Upper Ferry.

well-known singer and the kitchen is the room where many of his friends would gather for parties. The most dominant features of the house are its two story bay windows, and ornate classical doorway with 1-foot square transom windows. It is the only house in the valley to possess these architectural features. Bay windows are a common feature of the Second Empire Style, a very popular fashion in the Maritimes in the late nineteenth century.¹⁸ This blending of cosmetic and stylistic features was common in Atlantic Canada at this time.

While many Codroy Valley residents chose the biscuit box form, some retained an earlier floor plan while borrowing the exterior features of this rectilinear box type. Francis McIsaac's house in St. Andrews from the outside follows the biscuit box style, but the interior plan shows a retention of the three room plan of kitchen, parlour and small bedroom on the ground floor (Figures 49 and 50). There is no central hall; the front door enters directly into the kitchen. Newspapers glued on the walls of the back addition for a wallpaper base, dating from 1949 and 1950, suggest the date for the construction of this porch.¹⁹ Likewise, in the kitchen and parlour, newspapers on the walls dating from the 1920s suggests when renovations were done.²⁰ This retention of an earlier plan shows that Francis McIsaac and his wife were both conservative and innovative; they borrowed the exterior features of a new fashion but retained a familiar spatial pattern. It is not coincidental that this house was also well known in St. Andrews as a ceilidh house. Visits, milling frolics and card games regularly occurred here. By retaining the familiar floor plan in a

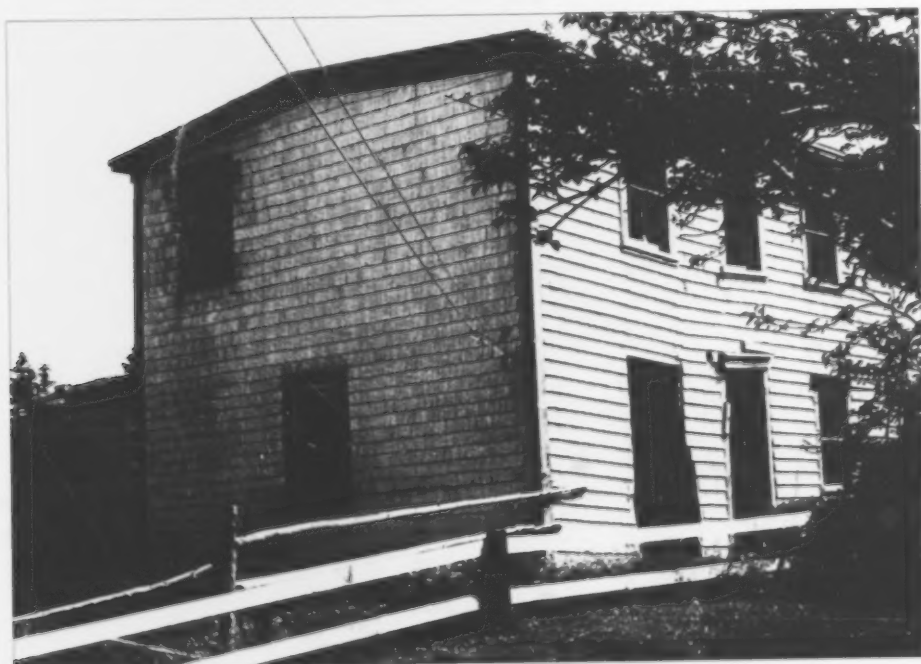


Figure 49. Francis McIsaac's house, St. Andrews.

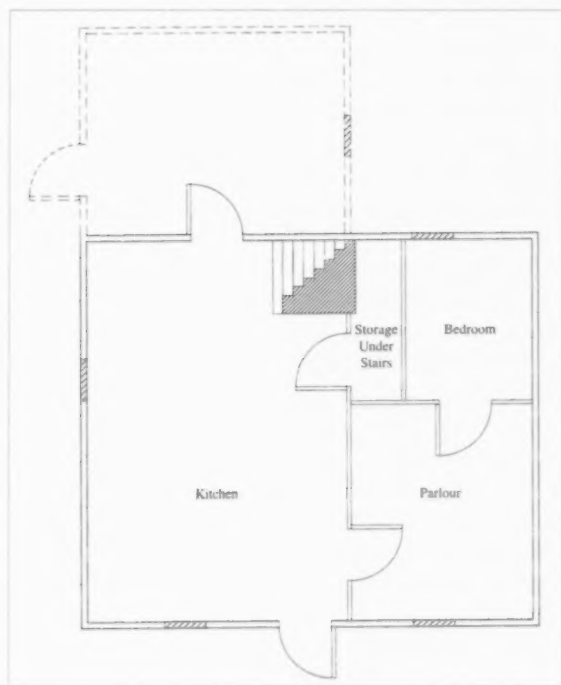


Figure 50.
*Floorplan, Francis McIsaac's house,
 St. Andrews.*

newer house, Francis was connecting with the past while still living in the modern world of turn-of-the-century Codroy Valley. He wanted to show the rest of the community he was aware of the newer architectural fashion but he did not completely discard the older conventional ways. One can conclude that when this architectural fashion was introduced, there was still a cultural need for larger kitchen spaces in Codroy Valley homes.

This flat-roofed form may have developed as a result of the introduction of new technology to Atlantic Canada. Balloon framing was being accepted by builders of the region, as were new forms of felt and asphalt roofing materials. Likewise, the raising of roofs and cutting down of roofs became a popular form of renovation. In winter many men occupied their time by making adjustments and repairs to their houses. Altering windows and doors and changing roofs was common, particularly when more money was available.

At the end of the nineteenth century new architectural ideas began to appear in the Codroy Valley, just as they did throughout eastern Canada. It was a time of great change. Railroads were developed, large industrial enterprises were started and tourism expanded, as visitors came to the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, the Margaree Valley, Cape Breton Island, and the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland. Doctors, judges, accountants and wealthy merchants from the New England States arrived in the Codroy Valley, via the railroad, completed in 1893, to enjoy nature in a pastoral setting. New architectural forms began to appear at this time. The gothic

revival houses with central facade peaks, the side-hall, gable entry dwellings or the two-thirds Georgian types, and the two storey, flat roof biscuit box houses all became popular by the end of the nineteenth century.

A few other characteristics of international building fashion began to appear in the valley by this time. The returned eaves of classical revival forms were occasionally found on some one and one-half storey hall parlour forms, but mainly on many of the two-thirds Georgian buildings. Only in two documented cases did builders use the two-storey bay window, a feature that became very popular in vernacular interpretations of the Second Empire style. The mansard roof — the one element of the Second Empire style commonly employed in vernacular buildings in Newfoundland — seems absent from the Codroy Valley, but was used in the nearby fishing community of Codroy. Nevertheless, one Codroy Valley builder, Anosan O'Quinn, cut down the peaked roof of his one and one-half storey hall parlour house, to make a gambrel approximation of a mansard roof. Another farmer, Allan McArthur, cut down his gable roof barn to form a similar kind of roof. Allan McArthur also built a home in the 1880s in Upper Ferry with many of the features of the gothic revival style including a pointed central dormer and gingerbread trim around the doors, eaves and windows. Two other houses in the valley — Cyril Ford's house in the Block and Joe Pat Downey's in Great Codroy — possess gothic peaked dormers but have few of the other features of this architectural fashion.

At the turn of the century, a minor construction boom began in the Codroy Valley and lasted well into the mid-teens. Newspaper accounts refer to the construction of barns, dwelling houses, a cold storage unit for the Codroy Valley Farmer's Association, a 42' by 32' drygoods store, a carding mill, a new blacksmith shop, a harness shop, and bridges spanning the rivers (Figure 51). Between 1900 and 1920



Figure 51. Gale's carding mill, Millville.

new classical revival churches were constructed in St. Andrews and South Branch and schools were built in the various districts.²¹ By 1919, shipbuilding was even occurring on the Grand River:

*There is quite an industry in shipbuilding at the Old Church, Grand River. E.J.G. [Gillis] has about 20 men employed building a vessel — she will be over a hundred tons. The vessel will be an able carrier and a splendid model. When completed she will no doubt be one of the finest vessels afloat, and as for material it cannot be beaten as she is being fully timbered with 8-inch old yellow birch. This will afford a lot of employment to the men here during the winter...*²²

Moreover, in 1919, a company planned to build a road through the Codroy Valley to Curling accompanied by a chain of hotels for Canadian and American tourists.²³ In 1920, two companies were mining coal at South Branch and the Little Codroy River. Although the mines were unsuccessful, for the first few years between thirty and fifty men were employed at these sites.²⁴ Throughout this time, an air of improvement existed in the valley. New technologies appeared. In 1920 the first car was introduced, and in 1921 the first sighting of an airplane occurred.²⁵ Some young Codroy Valley men were experimenting with fox and rabbit ranches, unheard of in the area before this. Others were attempting to grow crops new to the region such as wheat, plum trees and different types of potatoes.²⁶ Steam-powered sawmills accompanied by shingle machines were established to cater to the increased lumber business in the valley.²⁷

The turn-of-the-century brought many changes to the valley. One was the introduction of flat and shallow pitched roofs, brought about with the invention of balloon framing. Until this time most buildings, whether log or frame, used steeply pitched gable roofs constructed mainly with heavy, hand-hewed mortise and tenon framing members. While balloon framing was invented as early as the 1830s, it was not introduced to this region until the end of the nineteenth century. Architectural historian Dell Upton points out that even though balloon framing was invented by the mid-nineteenth century, its adoption was gradual. Some builders adopted aspects of balloon framing techniques while retaining some of their older, more familiar timber framing techniques. Upton says: "aspects of traditional timber framing survived in some areas into the twentieth century...."²⁸ This was the clearly the case in the Codroy Valley.

What is interesting is that, while these new architectural ideas indicate an awareness of international fashion, they did not usurp all of the older patterns. In other words, people did not discard the old building patterns with the arrival of the new; rather, the new patterns were incorporated into the Codroy Valley building repertoire. For example, Francis McIsaac chose to retain an older floor plan while using the modern biscuit box exterior. Others such as Cyril Ford and Joe Pat Downey added only selected cosmetic features of the gothic revival to their already constructed homes. Codroy Valley builders continued to construct large kitchens and smaller parlours within the confines of these international forms even though they

required more spatial division within houses. In some cases, a combination of heavy framing and balloon framing was employed in the same building, showing that the older techniques were employed alongside the new and that the new manner of building did not hastily usurp the older form of construction.

What is happening here is that the community is retaining control over its built environment. Community norms allow outside ideas to enter the area as innovations, but these innovations do not immediately destroy the older patterns of building. The Codroy Valley is stamping these outside ideas with its vernacular dialect, making a unique form of architecture in the Codroy Valley. But it was the economic changes and coincidental community optimism that allowed the introduction of these new ideas to the building tradition in the first place. The new cash injected into the communities with the development of tourism and other major economic developments, along with the optimism perpetuated by these forces, was the catalyst for changes in the building tradition. The values and attitudes of Codroy Valley residents are clearly expressed in their architecture. The introduction of newer styles shows that housing was indeed a vehicle for displaying new found material success; yet people valued older ways, and continued to follow older patterns.

As the twentieth century progressed the Codroy Valley was bombarded with new ideas from a variety of mass-media sources including newspapers, magazines, and later in the century, radio and television. The changes in architecture that began at the end of the nineteenth century continued as the twentieth century progressed. New architectural forms, designed in other places for a different population, made their way to this region, and the people of this area continued to personalize and modify these ideas to suit their own values and needs. The twentieth century brought the influence of mass housing. So how did residents of the Codroy Valley adopt and modify this new wave of architectural styles?

Notes

1. See, for example: Sally McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in 19th Century America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800–1860," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 19 (1984), 107–151; Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 9–78.
2. Bernard L. Herman, *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700–1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), pp. 148–198.
3. See Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*, University of Pennsylvania Publications in Folklore and Folklife, No. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 54, 56; Alan Noble, *Wood, Brick and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), pp. 107–09.

4. See Joann Latremouille, *Pride of Home: The Working Class Housing Tradition in Nova Scotia, 1749–1949* (Hantsport, Nova Scotia, Lancelot Press, 1986), p. 30; Leslie Maitland, *Neoclassical Architecture in Canada*, Studies in Archaeology, Architecture and History (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Site Branches Parks Canada, Environment Canada, 1984); Fredericton Heritage Trust, *Heritage Handbook* (Fredericton: Fredericton Heritage Trust, 1982), pp. 10–11; Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (1944; rpt. New York: Dover, 1964).
5. Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), pp. 38–39.
6. Hubka, *Big House*, p. 196.
7. Latremouille, p. 30; Fredericton Heritage Trust, pp. 10–11.
8. Richard P. MacKinnon, "The Regional Architectural Forms of the Margaree Valley, Cape Breton Island," *Society for the Study of Architecture, Selected Papers* (Ottawa: Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, 1982), pp. 8–15.
9. Richard P. MacKinnon, "Making a House a Home: Company Housing in Cape Breton Island," *Material History Review*, 47 (1998), pp. 46–56.
10. Peter Ennals and Deryk Holdsworth, "Vernacular Architecture and the Cultural Landscape of the Maritime Provinces: A Reconnaissance," *Acadiensis*, 10, No. 2 (1981), pp. 101–102.
11. See George MacLaren, *The Romance of the Heating Stove* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1972), pp. 1–21; Shane O'Dea, "The Development of Cooking and Heating Technology in the Newfoundland House," *Material History Bulletin*, 15 (1982), 11–18.
12. *Newfoundlander*, 8 October 1880. For other reports on Codroy Valley agriculture at this period see *Newfoundlander*, 10 June 1881; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1877, Appendix, p. 898; John H. Warren, Surveyor General reports in 1877, "I cannot here refrain from referring to a new feature to our agricultural capabilities, that of the importation into St. John's of a cargo of remarkably fine cattle from the valley of the Codroys, which found a ready sale, obtaining prices remunerative to the stock farmer or original owners and to those who speculated in the same." *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1877, Appendix, p. 898.
13. See, for example: *Western Star*, 11 November 1908.
14. David B. Mills, "The Development of Folk Architecture in Trinity Bay," in *The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography*, ed. John J. Mannion, Social and Economic Papers, No. 8 (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1977), pp. 93–94.
15. Mills, "The Development of Folk Architecture," p. 93.
16. Ennals and Holdsworth, pp. 101–102.
17. Richard MacKinnon Fieldnotes, August 11, 1982, MUNFLA. These two carpenters were part of the team of men who constructed St. Anne's church in Searston in 1930.

18. See: Christina Cameron and Janet Wright, *Second Empire Style in Canadian Architecture*, Canadian Historic Sites, Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, No. 24 (Ottawa: Parks Canada: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1980). Much of the downtown section of the city of St. John's, Newfoundland is built in this style, mainly because an architect named Southcott introduced this fashion to the city in the late nineteenth century. Even today houses of this kind are locally referred to as being in the "Southcott style." See: Shane O'Dea, "John T. Southcott," in *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolph K. Placzek (New York: Macmillan, 1982), IV, 112.
19. Newspapers pasted to the walls of this addition include *The Star Weekly*, 17 June 1950; *Newfoundland Government Bulletin*, April/May, 1949; *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, 22 June 1950.
20. *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, 23 November 1927; *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, 16 December 1925; *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, 19 October 1927; *Sydney Daily Post*, 29 May 1920.
21. *Western Star*, 1 May 1907; *Western Star*, 13 February 1918; *Western Star*, 23 December 1908; *Western Star*, 2 October 1907; *Western Star*, 7 March 1917.
22. *Western Star*, 6 February 1918; this vessel was purchased in 1919 by R. Moulton Ltd.; *Western Star*, 23 July 1919.
23. According to newspaper reports, this company was planning to spend more than \$500,000 on this idea. *Western Star*, 30 July 1919.
24. *Western Star*, 25 August 1920; *Western Star*, 10 November 1920; *Western Star*, 24 November 1920; *Western Star*, 2 February 1921; *Western Star*, 8 June 1921; *Western Star*, 27 April 1921; *Western Star*, 19 January 1921; *Western Star*, 26 January 1921.
25. *Western Star*, 10 November 1920; *Western Star*, 21 December 1921.
26. *Western Star*, 25 January 1922.
27. *Western Star*, 9 January 1924; *Western Star*, 19 October 1921.
28. Dell Upton, "Traditional Timber Framing," in *Material Culture of the Wooden Age*, ed. Brooke Hindle (Tarrytown, New York: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1981), pp. 91–93.

CHAPTER 5

Mass Housing Comes to the Codroy Valley: 1920 – the present



The 1920s mark another change in the architecture of the Codroy Valley: the arrival of mass housing. Put simply, mass housing is architecture for the masses, the buildings designed for the middle class, or the majority of a population. The phrase also connotes mass production, pre-fabrication of materials and construction, conformity and a limited number of housing options. For example, many suburban residents of North American cities in the early twentieth century lived in "bungalows." These structures looked alike, were built of similar materials, often used factory and sawmill lumber with balloon framing technology, and were designed and sometimes even manufactured in a location far away from the actual building site. The bungalow is perhaps the best example of a twentieth century "mass" house style which was accepted wholeheartedly in North America and indeed throughout much of the western world.¹ By the 1920s these houses, designed in other places for other requirements, began to be built in the Atlantic Provinces, a pattern which continues to the present. Yet, even though these forms were not designed with the needs of Codroy Valley men and women in mind, residents used them but stamped them with their own unique characteristics. The widespread North American bungalows were not accepted completely. Some older patterns of the region continued to exist within these newer frames and facades. With Neil at my side I continued to visit Codroy Valley homes to explore the ways local men and women amalgamated their own architectural ideas with this unique brand of 20th century mass housing.

First, I had to look at one particular form that straddles both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is a transitional house type that possesses features of both the late nineteenth century two-thirds Georgian plan and the emerging twentieth century bungalow style. This two storey house type emerged in the district by the 1920s. It has its main entrance on the gable end but differs from the two-thirds Georgian plan in that the main door is in the centre of the gable, and there is no hallway. The front door opens directly into the living room and the floor plan is divided into three rooms: a parlour and living room in the front, and a kitchen across the back. Rooms such as porches and bathrooms are often placed at the back of the house off the kitchen. Started in 1944, and completed in 1946, Frank and Annie Wall's house in St Andrew's is 25 by 31 feet in size (Figures 52 and 53).

Few people have written about this type, although it was popular in other Atlantic Canadian communities at this same time.² It was used extensively for commercial businesses such as the Co-operative store in South Branch (Figure 54), and for general stores throughout Atlantic Canada. I suspect builders of family dwellings borrowed the idea from the commercial establishments and it became

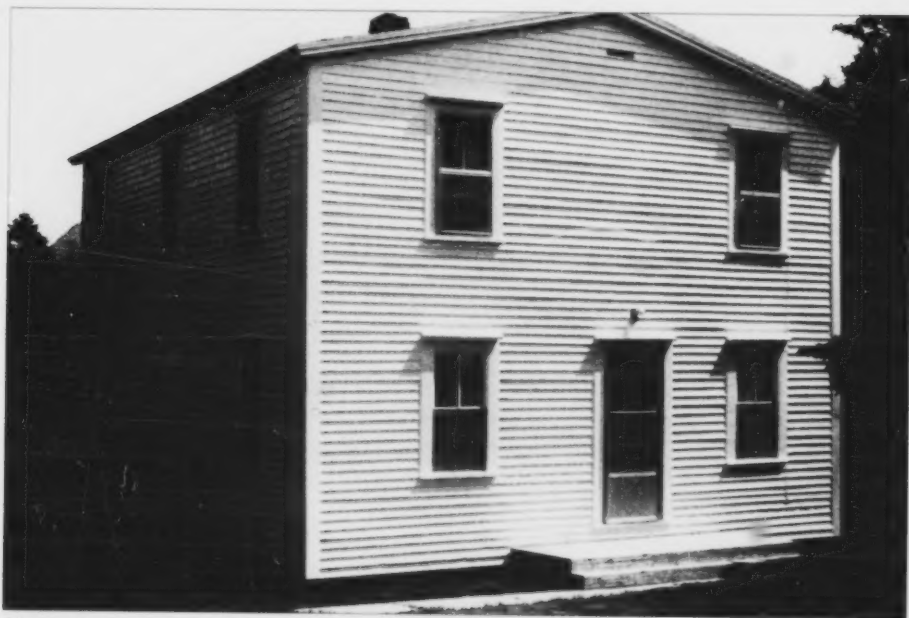


Figure 52. Frank and Annie Wall's house, St. Andrews.

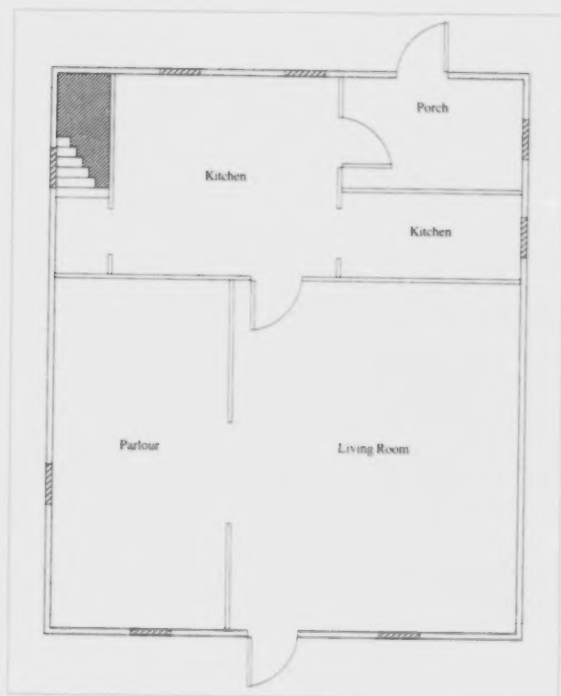


Figure 53.
Floorplan, Frank and Annie Wall's
house, St. Andrews.



Figure 54. Cooperative Store, South Branch.

a common house type in the Atlantic region. Nevertheless, it was not extremely popular in the Codroy Valley as I recorded only three examples while conducting fieldwork. A fourth house was converted to this plan in the 1930s. It is a transitional form in that its doorway in the gable end, one and one-half storey height and classical revival turned eaves are features of the side hall house. Its floorplan is found in the most popular bungalow plans in the region.

While only a few examples of this transitional type remain, the most popular form throughout the twentieth century is a local bungalow type that appeared in the early years of the twentieth century and is still being built. The word "bungalow" has a variety of meanings around the world. In Cape Breton Island the term has become synonymous with a small summer house used for leisure activities. This follows a British Isles pattern where, since the mid-nineteenth century, the term has referred to a "purpose-built leisure or holiday house."³ The development of the bungalow is traced around the world by Anthony D. King who shows how this idea evolved into complex types ranging from a European adaptation of a Bengali peasant dwelling, "the banggolo," to the African Colonial residence; from a North American vacation house, to a suburban California bungalow; and from a "garden city" dwelling, to the Australian "tropical bungalow."⁴ King proves that the bungalow idea was spread throughout North America at the turn of the twentieth century mainly by pattern books, architecture journals and popular literature.⁵ He says, "At one level, the actual idea of the bungalow seems to have arrived in North America by way of an increasing professional network, an interchange of books and journals,

including the *English Building News*, and *The Studio*”⁶ More importantly, he argues that Americans, at the end of the nineteenth century, were struck with the full impact of urbanization and turned to nature in an attempt to “escape the minor irritants” of urban life.⁷ The bungalow was accepted wholeheartedly by the general public, because it was associated with a back-to-nature movement that promoted rusticity, rugged life, and vacationing in rural regions away from the industry and noise of the city. In fact, residents of the many suburban neighborhoods throughout North America either chose this form, or had this form imposed upon them by developers who were attempting to meet the public’s need for mass housing.

Returning to nature was not a new idea. It was a recurring theme in the eighteenth century development of romanticism which influenced all forms of the arts and literature and even promoted an interest in the study of folklore and folk culture.⁸ This end of the nineteenth century back-to-nature ideology was accompanied by an American interest in the English Arts and Crafts movement, which promoted nature and handcraftsmanship. People such as John Ruskin and William Morris, two of the British founders of this philosophy, influenced and inspired American proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement. Underlying this philosophy was a dislike for modern civilization, industrialization and materialism. These were viewed as degenerative forces on society. Conversely, all things pre-industrial, from handcraftsmanship in textiles and stained glass, to medieval stories of knights and chivalry, were perceived to be inherently beautiful and regenerative forces for the human being.⁹ The North American bungalow as we know it developed from this ideology at the end of the nineteenth century.

The word “bungalow” in the Codroy Valley does not refer to a summer dwelling, or to a suburban house, but to a one-story dwelling house used the entire year. There are two subtypes of what I have called “local bungalows,” those with an entrance in the gable end and those with a symmetrical facade and entrance in the long side of the house. Nicholas Luedee’s house in Loch Lomond is an example of the first type (Figures 55 and 56). Built in 1935 by Nicholas just before he was married, it is 25 by 39 feet and has a floor plan of a parlour, kitchen, four bedrooms and a bathroom. A root cellar is located in the basement. A two-storey flat roof house, biscuit box type, initially owned by Angus J. MacNeil was located on this property before Nicholas built the bungalow. Nicholas cut all his own wood and bought his windows from a travelling merchant from Spaniards Bay. He used a machine for clearing land, a “stumper,” to prepare the ground for his house. The idea for this house derived from a magazine he had seen. He referred to the plan as a “Kenmore” plan, after the company who published a book of plans. Originally the house had two bedrooms with no indoor bathroom. By 1947, when Nicholas’ family grew, he needed to build a side addition that included two more bedrooms and a bathroom. Other renovations included replacing the original four pane windows in 1975.

A second example of this gable entry local bungalow type is Ned Gale’s house in South Branch (Figure 57). Ned’s house, built in 1954 and similar to Nicholas Luedee’s house, has a different interior floor plan. Its main floor consists of a

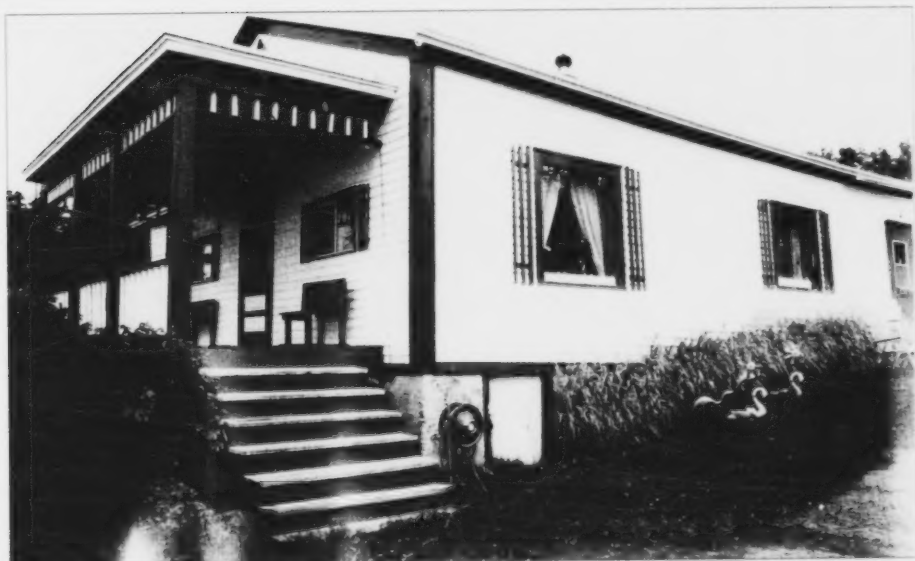


Figure 55. *Nicholas Luedee's house, Loch Lomond.*

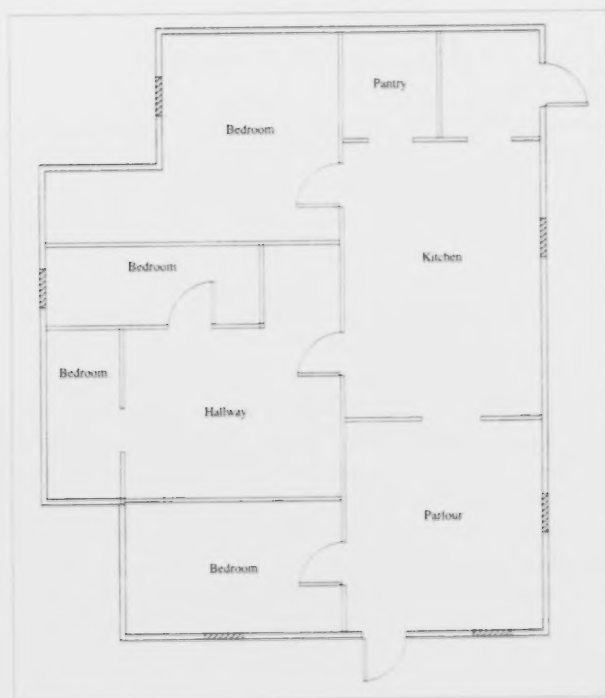


Figure 56.
Floorplan, Nicholas Luedee's house, Loch Lomond.



Figure 57. Ned Gale's house, South Branch.

kitchen, pantry, parlour, four bedrooms and a storage room with a root cellar underneath. Even though it was built in the 1950s, the house is without electricity and an indoor bathroom. Ned's lumber was cut on his own land and he used his sawmill to cut and plane the wood for construction. Two wood stoves heat the house, one in the kitchen and the other in the hallway. According to Ned, he followed no plan when he built this house; rather, he built a frame and then decided upon the interior space. He completed the kitchen first, as it is the most used room, and then divided the rest of the house. The kitchen contains two chairs, a daybed, a wood box, a bench, a photograph of the William Carson ferry on the wall and a Codroy Valley Farm Supplies calendar. Since Ned is the only occupant of the dwelling, the kitchen is the room used most often for eating and sleeping while the parlour and other bedrooms are used mainly for storage. Within the parlour, Ned keeps tools, parts of engines and saw blades. In fact, this room now functions more as a storage barn than a parlour.

The second subtype of the local bungalow style is the one-storey house with a shallow pitched roof, symmetrical facade and a central door flanked by two windows. An example is Mike MacNeil's house in St. Andrews (Figure 58). Built in 1957 by Reginald Hibbs, it was located next to the train station in St. Andrews. It was moved in 1960 one-half mile north to its present location near the Church of the Precious Blood in St. Andrews. Shortly after the move, a back addition was built, making room for a larger kitchen. Mike MacNeil bought the house in 1979. He built a second addition in 1981, adding yet more space to the kitchen. The present



Figure 58. Mike MacNeil's house, St. Andrews.

floor plan consists of a kitchen, living room, three small bedrooms, and a bathroom, with no basement underneath.

In contrast to the local bungalow, there is the minimal unit bungalow containing a large kitchen and a small sleeping area. An example is Peter Blanchard's house, used now as a shed by Mike MacNeil (Figures 59 and 60). Built in the 1930s, it was originally located on the Searston Road, about one mile from its present St. Andrews location. It was moved to this site in the early 1950s. Blanchard moved to a Senior Citizen's home in Stephenville in 1965, and the house was empty for the next 15 years. Then in 1980, Mike MacNeil began using it as a shed. Much of the lumber and materials in the construction of this building were re-used from older buildings. The six-over-six window, for example, was borrowed from an older building dismantled in Searston. With this building, as with other bungalow forms in the Codroy Valley, it is common to find hand-hewed lumber, re-used from earlier barns and houses, alongside sawmill-cut timber. Other small houses of this kind include Neil McIsaac's house in St. Andrews and Hughie O'Quinn's house in the area known as "The Block."

Larger than the minimal unit bungalow, but smaller than the local bungalow style, is the pyramidal roof bungalow or, as it is locally called, the "barrack roof" house. Built from the 1920s until the present, its name derives from the hay barrack, a hay storage structure that was once common not only in the Codroy Valley and in its antecedent area of Cape Breton Island, but also in other regions of North America. Individuals have chosen a number of different plans. There does not



Figure 59. Peter Blanchard's house, St. Andrews.

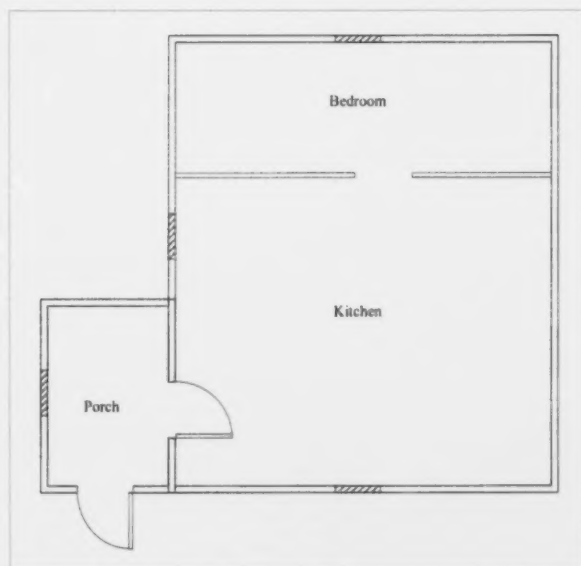


Figure 60.
Floorplan, Peter Blanchard's
house, St. Andrews.

seem to be a standard floor plan for this form. Archie Francis and Lizzie McIsaac's house in St. Andrews is one example of this form. (Figures 61 and 62) It was built in 1932, the year Archie Francis and Lizzie were married, and was originally 2 x 28 feet in length. In 1970, the year their daughter was married, an 8 foot back addition was constructed so the bride and groom could share their home. Windows were originally



Figure 61. Archie Francis and Lizzie McIsaac's house, St. Andrews.

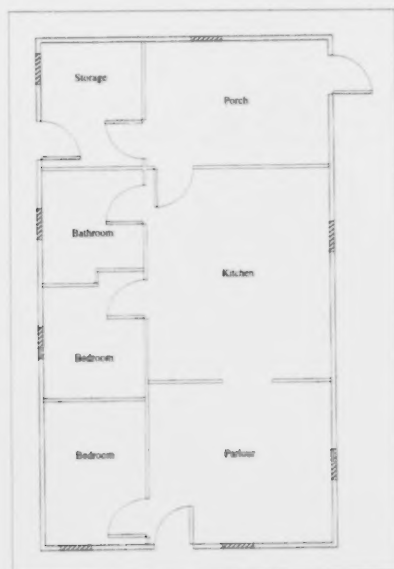


Figure 62.
Floorplan, Archie Francis
and Lizzie McIsaac's house,
St. Andrews.

four-paned. These were replaced in 1976 with sliding windows. It is clapboarded on two sides and shingled on the other sides. The front door is seldom used; in fact, it is nailed shut. The plan includes a kitchen and parlour back to back, two bedrooms, a bathroom, storage room and back porch (Figures 63 and 64). The house sits on a fieldstone foundation and does not contain a cellar.¹⁰



Figure 63.
View of kitchen, Archie Francis and Lizzie McIsaac's house, St. Andrews.



Figure 64.
View of parlour, Archie Francis and Lizzie McIsaac's house, St. Andrews.

Another floor plan used in houses of this kind is Johnny Archie (the fiddler) MacDonald's house in St. Andrews (Figures 65 and 66). It was built in the 1930s, the same time as Archie Francis McIsaac's house. Although similar to Archie Francis's house, MacDonald's house has a completely different layout. The front door enters directly into a parlour, and the kitchen is located beside the parlour at the front of the house. To the rear of the kitchen and parlour is added a small hallway, off which three bedrooms and a bathroom are located. Shortly after the house was constructed, a porch and pantry were added to the side of the dwelling. Measuring 24 by 36 feet, it was heated by one stove in the kitchen and one at the end of the hallway. This was a common pattern in Codroy Valley houses. It sits on a concrete foundation with no cellar.



Figure 65. Johnny Archie (the fiddler) MacDonald's house in St. Andrews.

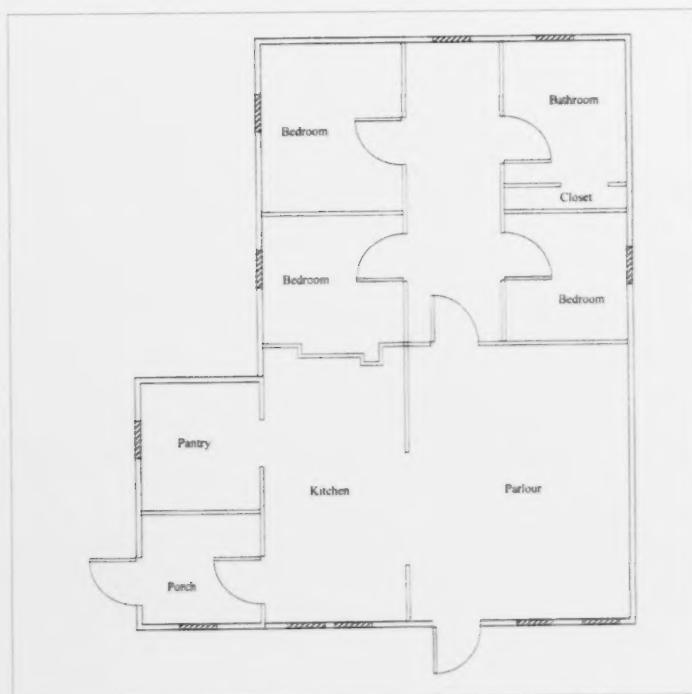


Figure 66.
Floorplan, Johnny
Archie (the fiddler)
MacDonald's house
in St. Andrews.

Yet another floor plan type appears in Angus MacNeil's barrack roof house in Upper Ferry (Figure 67). Built in 1943, it has a central door on a symmetrical facade, flanked by two windows on each side. The door leads into a central hall that contains a stairwell leading to an upstairs bedroom. At the end of the hallway are doors leading to a parlour and kitchen located at the front of the house, and two bedrooms and a bathroom situated at the rear. It is 29 by 27 feet and is situated on a concrete foundation. Cutting the roofline is a square-headed dormer which allows light into the upper storey. Other barrack roof houses appear in communities such as Tompkins, Upper Ferry, Searston, St. Andrews, and Doyles.

Bungalow design books, written and distributed by the Canadian federal government, began to appear in the Codroy Valley by the 1950s. Central Mortgage and Housing and, later, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided booklets displaying ideal house plans. New ideas for Codroy Valley residents were offered in these publications. One farmer showed me a copy of a Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation booklet he used, dating from the mid-1950s.¹¹ This pamphlet offers a variety of bungalow plans for the builder of moderate means.

While Codroy Valley farmers were familiar with these plans, Codroy Valley builders rejected some of the notions expounded in this kind of material. In one pamphlet, *Principles of Small House Grouping*, many of the suggestions offered by the authors are irrelevant for Codroy Valley residents. For example, there is much discussion about how pleasing, economical and effective it is to group similar types of houses in the landscape to ensure a sense of order:



Figure 67. Angus MacNeil's barrack roof house, Upper Ferry.

*Houses within a group should be so designed that they bear a family resemblance and complement one another. In this way the scene becomes one of harmony rather than a hodgepodge of shapes, materials and details which so often occur.*¹²

This neighbourhood organization pattern was followed by suburban developers and citizens in small towns and cities of Canada but was not deemed acceptable by Codroy Valley builders. In this region, houses were built individually, usually at around the time a young man and woman decided to marry. People did not co-operatively build a number of houses or a "housing group," even though there was often much assistance provided by neighbors when a house or outbuilding was constructed. This housing group concept promoted by the Central Mortgage and Housing was popular in the many small, industrial communities of Cape Breton Island from the 1940s through to the 1970s, but was foreign to Codroy Valley builders.¹³ Codroy Valley residents were familiar with some of the architectural plans produced by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, yet there was not a whole-hearted acceptance of these outside forms; only a select number of types were accepted. While the earlier Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation publications and the later Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation booklets provide a great variety of designs, ranging from split level bungalows, to three bedroom, two storey forms, Codroy Valley residents mainly chose one particular form for their dwellings — a one storey bungalow form with a front door on the long side of the house (Figures 68 and 69).



Figure 68. Richard McIsaac's house, St. Andrews.

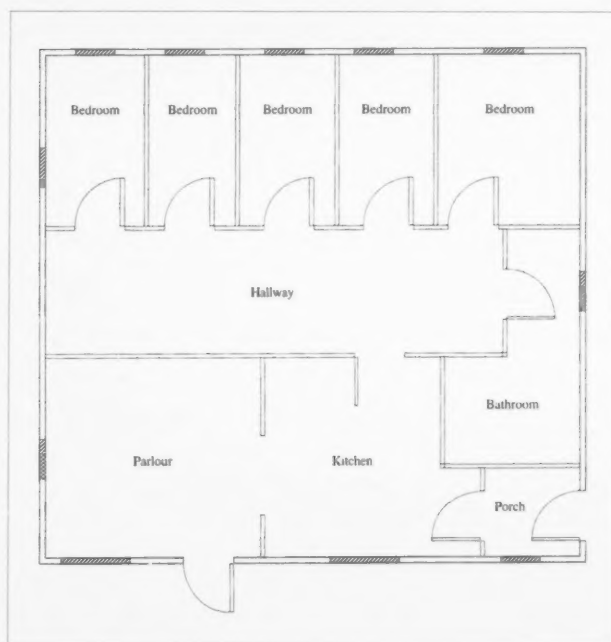


Figure 69.
Floorplan, Richard McIsaac's
house, St. Andrews.

Codroy Valley residents continued to alter these plans to suit their own needs. In contemporary Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation plans, the living room is often the largest room in the house. In Codroy Valley CMHC-influenced houses, residents often enlarged the kitchens by eliminating the dining room or they combined a kitchen and living room to make one large room for much of their daily activity. Moreover, additions were frequently added to the sides or rear of the house, whenever there was a need for more space. Only recently has there been a tendency to create an actual living space in basements in the form of recreation rooms, laundry rooms or bedrooms.¹⁴

King claims that one of the main features of the American bungalow is that it is devoid of regional variation:

*The pattern books, the bungalow firms, the magazine articles and advertisements, the growing mobility of the population ensured that, after the first World War, the bungalow — and later the ranch house — became familiar all over the USA. Whilst Chicago's centre might be different from that of Philadelphia, the suburban bungalows of each were increasingly the same.*¹⁵

Likewise, Latremouille argues that the bungalow form introduced by the Canadian Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation destroyed a longstanding Nova Scotia housing tradition:

*The final blow to regional architecture in Canada came with the publication of the series, Small House Designs in 1949. These booklets presented plans for bungalows, storey-and-a-half, and two storey houses. The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation distributed 160,000 copies of the series throughout the country in the first year of their publication.... By 1949 a housing tradition with a history of two hundred years of complex development had effectively come to an end in Nova Scotia.*¹⁶

With Codroy Valley bungalows, in contrast, variation did occur at a number of levels. Bungalow dimensions and floor plans differed, as did the ways in which individuals decorated dwellings with exterior cosmetic details and interior ornamentation. But more importantly, Codroy Valley residents did not rely upon real estate companies or speculators for their bungalows. Rather, the bungalow builders of this region cut their own wood, had it sawn at the local sawmills and, in most cases, built the houses themselves. Friends and neighbors provided some assistance and some individuals were known as specialists in the construction of houses, outbuildings and churches. Nevertheless, control remained solely in the hands of local people.

In other Canadian towns, cities and regions, real estate firms and land speculators constructed bungalows for patrons or offered prefabricated factory-built bungalows for homeowners. However, this type of arrangement does not promote regional or individual variation. Some Codroy residents did not have formal plans when constructing their dwellings. Others used patterns found in books and periodicals. It is difficult to discover the kinds of published materials that would have been in circulation throughout the Codroy Valley offering architectural ideas from the turn of the century through to the 1950s. A superficial sense is obtained by wading through some of the magazines collected by one farmer — Fintan Downey of Great Codroy. These date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His collection includes religious magazines such as *The Ave Maria*, agricultural magazines such as *Canadian Farmer*, *Good Farming Quarterly*, *The Goodyear Farm Yearbook*, and *The Taco Farm Yearbook*, carpentry magazines such as *Workbench*, and *The Family Handyman*, and popular magazines such as *The Atlantic Advocate*, and *The Family Herald*.¹⁷ Likewise, newspapers such as the *Acadian Recorder*, *The Cape Breton Post Record*, and *The Boston Herald* were found pasted to interior wallboards in many turn-of-the-century Codroy Valley dwellings as a base for wallpaper (Figure 70). The idea of the new bungalow form may well have derived from some of these published sources.

In contrast, Codroy residents who, with the advent of the railroad, were beginning to travel more frequently to areas far away may have seen bungalows in other places. Some valley residents traveled to the West Coast of Canada on the "harvest excursion" trains. Popular destinations for local travelers included Cape Breton Island and New England where residents could visit friends and relatives who had already migrated to these districts in search of employment.¹⁸



Figure 70. Boston Herald used as a base for wallpaper.

Yet another source contributed to the development of the bungalow — the rise of tourism. Tourism has played an important role in the Codroy Valley since the late nineteenth century. At a time when leisure travel was becoming more common in North America, wealthy tourists paid regular visits to the region to fish for trout and salmon, hunt moose and caribou, and experience the wild outdoors in the picturesque valley nestled between the Anguille and Long Range mountains. A number of Codroy Valley families were able to make money on this tourist trade by providing accommodations, food, hospitality and guides for the visitors who were, in many cases, wealthy citizens from places such as Boston, New York, Halifax and St. John's. These visitors were primarily responsible for introducing a sub-category of mass housing — the tourist bungalow.

Numerous small tourist bungalows or what local residents refer to as "cabins" appear throughout the valley, particularly in close proximity to some of the better known fishing spots and near the rivers, along the tracks of the railroad (Figure 71). These buildings were often given a rustic quality by the inclusion of stone chimneys and fireplaces, even though at this time architectural features such as these were not a part of the Codroy Valley building repertoire. Moreover, log construction was frequently used to add to the ambience of rusticity. Some tourist cabins are still being built and used at the present, although the contemporary ones do not use log construction techniques (Figure 72).



Figure 71.
Tourist cabin, South Branch.

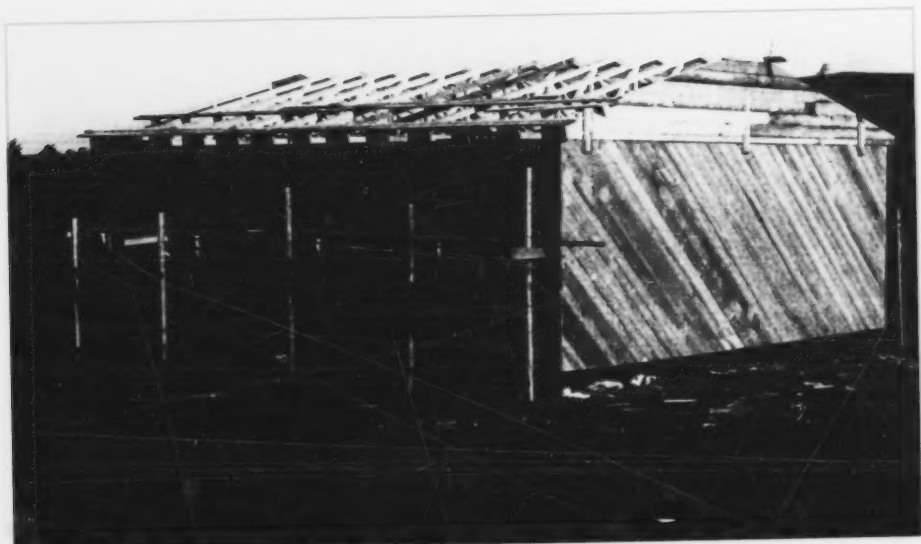


Figure 72. *Contemporary tourist cabin being built, Searston.*

While these tourist bungalows or cabins became a part of the architectural landscape, a number of lodges catering to the tourist trade were also constructed, the best known being the Afton House, in Tompkins, operated by Myles Tompkins. The tourist lodges were basically modified Codroy Valley homes. No new architectural types appeared to meet this new local need. Afton House was a two storey biscuit box home. A number of additions made to the building accommodated paying guests. The tourist no doubt enjoyed the experience of living in a Codroy valley home and having the opportunity to meet and talk with local residents in their own habitat. These places provided accommodations and hosts acted as local guides taking tourists to the good hunting spots in the mountains and the salmon pools on the rivers. These tourist experiences may be viewed as precursors to the bed and breakfast and Country Inn establishments, so popular in eastern Canada at the present.

Mass housing influenced not only the dwellings of the district, but also some of the outbuildings. By the 1930s, another barn type, the bank barn, began to be built in the Codroy Valley. Alban J. Downey, a farmer, from Great Codroy introduced the two bank barns of the region at this time (Figure 73). Mike J. Downey, a draftsman with the Bowater Pulp and Paper Company in Corner Brook, and nephew of Alban J. Downey, designed the bank barn for Alban in the 1930s. Common in other areas of North America, this type is said to have developed some of its unique features in the German areas of Pennsylvania. In fact, it is often referred to in the literature as the Pennsylvania bank barn. This barn type, however, was not readily accepted by Codroy Valley farmers, for only one other farmer in the valley, Frank O'Quinn from Searston, decided to copy this form for his main outbuilding. The district's farmers mainly chose the earlier log barns, the widespread frame English barns, and hay barracks to house their livestock, implements and hay.



Figure 73. Bank barn, Alban J. Downey's farm.

Mass housing influenced both building form and technology in the Codroy Valley. A mass building technique — balloon framing — was used in both the flat and shallow pitched two storey houses, the bungalow forms and the tourist cabins which began to appear at this time in the twentieth century. Even though various one storey bungalow forms readily employed this construction technique, some Codroy Valley builders chose to re-use parts of older buildings in these newer forms. In fact, the whole concept of re-use is an extremely important part of the Codroy Valley vernacular building tradition. It is not uncommon to find an early twentieth century bungalow, with hand hewed floor joists and wall plates that were re-used from earlier Codroy Valley structures.

The turn-of-the-century period also brought new floorplans and styles to the Codroy Valley. Houses not only were smaller at this time but also were divided into more rooms. But not everyone followed this pattern. Some builders decided to retain the older derivation of the hall-parlour plan while building a pyramidal or "barrack roof" bungalow.

While numerous bungalow forms existed in North America at this period, Codroy Valley residents chose particular forms to suit their own needs. Two local bungalow types were common: the gable entry form and the long side entrance form. Owners often built additions on these types when, for example, a family expanded, or when there was a real or perceived need for more space. The other major bungalow type in the region is the pyramidal roof or barrack roof form. While this form seems to be widespread in North America at this time, Codroy Valley bungalows retained some of the older patterns by constructing root cellars along with large kitchens and parlours. Living rooms appeared in some of these forms but often functioned as the parlour did in earlier houses — as a place for special occasions. In essence, behaving in this way, Codroy Valley builders were preserving an older spatial pattern in a new house form. Central Mortgage and Housing bungalows, perpetuated by the Canadian federal government, likewise were adapted and altered to meet the needs of community members.

Vernacular architecture of the Codroy Valley was influenced greatly in the twentieth century by a mass housing tradition from outside the district. Even though people were geographically isolated, they were following some mainstream architectural trends. This shows that mass culture is all pervasive but is also reveals much about Codroy Valley people. They did not merely copy these forms; rather, residents selectively borrowed from this tradition, taking a few templates and modifying these to suit their own requirements.

The processes of historical evolution in the Codroy Valley are clear. While it is necessary to understand these patterns of development, it is also important to assess the local contexts that influence the region's architecture. The Codroy Valley's local style of mass housing has led me to the conclusion that modification is an important part of personalizing the buildings which people live in and use. In the modifications, one can see the desires and attitudes of people. The way in which Codroy Valley buildings have been altered, changed, converted, and moved, with the passage of time, is also an important part of the vernacular building tradition of the region.

Notes

1. For a discussion of "mass" housing see: Deryck Holdsworth, "Regional Distinctiveness in an Industrial Age: Some Californian Influences on British Columbia Housing," *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, 12 (1982), 64–81.
2. See *Le Paysage Architectural Traditionnel Des Îles-De-La-Madelaine* (Québec: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1983), p. 20. This gable end, centre doorway plan was sometimes used in commercial establishments throughout the Maritimes at this time. See: Joseph Lehmann and Gary T. Whiteford, *Kings Landing: A Geography Guide* (Fredericton: Kings Landing Corporation, 1980), p. 42.
3. Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 65.
4. King, *The Bungalow*, for other studies of this architectural form see: Clay Lancaster, *The American Bungalow* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984); Deryck Holdsworth, "Regional Distinctiveness in an Industrial Age: Some Californian Influences on British Columbia Housing," *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, 12, (1982), 64–81.
5. King, p. 130. See also, Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800–1860," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 19 (1984), 107–150.
6. King, p. 130.
7. King, p. 133.
8. One of the major forces in the development of Folklore as a discipline was this romantic idealism. See for example, some of the standard histories of Folklore: Richard M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Simon J. Bronner, *American Folklore Studies: An Intellectual History* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1986), p. 29; Dag Strömbäck, ed. *Leading Folklorists of the North* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Books, 1971); Jouko Hautala, *Finnish Folklore Research, 1929–1919* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1969).
9. King, p. 133; see also: Edward P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976); for a study of the Arts and Crafts movement see: Isabelle Anscombe and Charlotte Gere, *Arts and Craft in Britain and America* (New York: Von Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1978).
10. This roof form is most frequently found on one and one-half story houses in the Codroy Valley; only in one case — Paul Joseph O'Quinn's house in Millville — is this roof type found on a two story building.
11. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Principles of Small House Grouping* (Ottawa: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, [1954]). Other publications from the Central Mortgage and Housing include: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Small House Designs* (Ottawa: Central Mortgage and Housing, 1949); Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Sketch Designs* (Ottawa: Department of Finance, 1946); Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *67 Homes for Canadians* (Ottawa: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1947). For a short history of the Central Mortgage and Housing

Corporation see Joann Latremouille, *Pride of Home: The Working Class Housing Tradition in Nova Scotia, 1749–1949* (Hantsport, Nova Scotia, Lancelot Press, 1986), pp. 83–91.

12. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Principles*, p.4.
13. For a discussion of cooperative housing in Cape Breton Island see: Richard MacKinnon, "Tompkinsville, Cape Breton Island: Cooperativism and Vernacular Architecture," *Material History Review*, 44 (1996), 45–63.
14. This area often includes a bar where mementos, souvenirs, trophies, and the like are displayed. Pat McIsaac's house, St. Andrews, has a bar in the basement complete with spinning wheels, trophies and various shell art objects ranging from lamps to lighthouses.
15. King, p. 152.
16. Latremouille, p. 87.
17. The magazines owned by Fintan Downey, Great Codroy, Codroy Valley have been deposited in the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archives. For a discussion of the influence of religious magazines on architecture see: Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in America, 1840–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 54–55.
18. For references to Codroy Valley residents travelling by train to other places outside the region see: *Western Star*, 11 November 1908; "Messrs. Hugh McInnis and Alex Ryan returned home last week from Sydney where they have been working most of the summer." *Western Star*, 23 December 1908; *Western Star*, 27 January 1909; *Western Star*, 1 June 1917; *Western Star*, 10 November 1920; *Western Star*, 22 November 1921.



CHAPTER 6

House Movings and Alterations: Stability and Change in the Codroy Valley Landscape



While driving along the banks of the Grand Codroy River on a sunny August afternoon, the visitor gets a magnificent view of the Long Range and Anguille mountains, the winding Codroy River, and the many farms which dot the shoreline and road. They can see the different architectural types, from nineteenth century one and one-half storey Cape Cod variants to local bungalows, from horizontal log sheep barns to classic English barns, and from hay barracks to small community general stores. Much about the Codroy Valley's past and present is revealed in these artifacts, but a closer inspection indicates that, with the passage of time, these structures have been continuously modified, converted and altered.¹

A quick drive through the valley gives an impression of the area's buildings, but this initial impression can lead to inaccurate conclusions if one is unfamiliar with local ways of altering buildings. Technological and stylistic changes are important to vernacular architecture scholars and a number of recent studies have been devoted to these concerns.² The introduction to a collection of essays on vernacular architecture states: "It is tempting to people steeped in the rapidly shifting fashions of modern popular culture to think of vernacular architecture, particularly in its traditional forms, as changeless. An emphasis on the enduring as indicative of deeply held values leads us at times to ignore change, or to treat it as unimportant."³ Nevertheless, many of our reconstructed and preserved buildings — the merchant's houses, the churches, the homes of our political leaders — often appear untouched by the passage of time and the changes in the economy, fashion and fad. Seldom does one find added kitchen wings, changes to rooflines, rear room additions, or second or third storeys added to original structures. Instead, buildings often appear to be in the same condition as when originally built. In a study of Ontario housing, Thomas McIlwraith points out that, in many of our reconstructed buildings, "the implication is that change occurred by discrete steps, and that entire units were constructed all at once, never again to be altered by more than a different coat of paint."⁴ My fieldwork in the Codroy Valley indicates that many buildings have had major and minor alterations. Some have even been moved varying distances within Codroy Valley communities. The tradition of altering, converting, and moving buildings in the Codroy Valley continues to this day yet it is seldom explored in most architecture studies. Through my research I learned how a local building tradition operates, how an architectural landscape changes with time, and why this kind of traditional activity occurs in a place such as the Codroy Valley.

My fieldwork reveals that more than twenty buildings were moved from one location to another (Figure 74). Some were moved within the boundaries of a farmer's land, some within the limits of a community, and yet others, from one



Figure 74.
Map of house movings
in Codroy Valley.

community to another. These buildings were moved many ways using a diversity of power sources. In the nineteenth century, oxen were frequently used for work on the farm, as well as for moving buildings. Today, the yokes that hang in many of the region's unused barns are reminders of these once common animals (Figure 75). With the advent of horse-drawn farm machinery in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, horses were used more, and some were used for moving buildings. If farm animals were unavailable, large groups of men provided the power for a house moving. With the introduction of road graders, tractors, and flatbed trucks by the 1940s, 50s and 60s, new power sources were used to move buildings (Figure 76). Neil McIsaac described how a road grader, "skids," and "rollers" were used to haul his father's house about a mile in the community of Tompkins in 1934. First, the house was jacked up from its stone foundation, and large logs, as long as the house, were cut to be used as "skids" or "runners," which were wedged under and spiked to the building. After this preparation, "rollers" or green cut logs were placed on the ground in front of the house to help move the "runners" along. As Neil commented:

Spruce or var [fir]...was the real thing because you'd want to get something slippery, well the shores or runners would run on it. And the runners, once you'd get it going the runners would slide right along it. And you had to keep them shores going ahead, according to the house. It would go off, a bunch of men picking them up and keeping them ahead.⁵



Figure 75.
Ox Yoke, Upper Ferry.



Figure 76.
*House moving using a
flatbed truck.*

In this particular house moving, a horse-drawn road grader with a cable attached to the runners by spikes provided the power for the move. These events were often large community gatherings, as important on a local scale as millings, spinnings, house or barn raisings or wood hauling frolics.⁶ While men were busy nailing spikes, putting rollers in place, attaching cables and watching along with the children, women were preparing a large meal for the participants. As Neil explained:

You had to prepare for a big dinner and there was liquor involved too. You'd kill a lamb and have it all, everything that goes with it, and after supper that lamb would be gone, there'd be none of it left.⁷

The food was often prepared in the field during the move, or within the house, as the building was being readied for its new location.

Buildings were hauled not only in springtime but also in winter. It was easier to haul houses and barns on the frozen rivers (which often became main valley roadways at this time) than on the muddy roads or rough terrain. When men hauled houses without the aid of tractors or animals, they often employed what are locally referred to as "stumpers" (Figure 77). Reverend Michael J. Howley, on a trip through the Codroy Valley in 1881, observed a stumping machine: "If this farming is carried on to a large extent, the stumps are extracted by a stumping machine at a cost of about 10 or 15 shillings per days hire."⁸ Mainly used for clearing land, a stumper also works well in moving large objects such as houses or barns. Nicholas Luedee's stumper, shown in Figure 77, was manufactured by the W. Smith Grubber Company from La Crescent, Minnesota, and although there is no date on the object, oral



Figure 77. Nicholas Luedee's stumper, Loch Lomond.

accounts record its use back at least to the turn of the twentieth century. It works by inserting a pole into the stump and having men push on the pole, which, in turn, causes the cable to tighten, moving the building along.

The house moving tradition is not unique to the Codroy Valley. In fact, house movings were prevalent not only in other parts of Newfoundland but also in the areas of Cape Breton Island from where Codroy Valley emigrants migrated.⁹ There is also evidence of a similar barn moving tradition in areas of Quebec, Ontario, Pennsylvania and Maine. In Pennsylvania, Howard Acree, a local innovator from a coal-mining community "paid \$100.00 for his coaltown house" in the early years of the twentieth century, "which he numbered board by board, dismantled, and transported with a team and wagon to its present site."¹⁰ Likewise, Victor Konrad and Michael Chaney concluded from a study of Madawaska Twin barns: "Considerable barn moving was the rule throughout late nineteenth and early twentieth century Maine."¹¹ Thomas Hubka analyzed the connected farm buildings of New England, and pointed out that moving structures was a common activity: "The frequency of moving major domestic and agricultural buildings in 18th and 19th century New England is staggering. When the history of building movement in a particular New England town is accurately recorded, as in the towns of Fryeburg and Cornish, Maine, it appears as if the entire town was constantly being moved about."¹²

It is misleading to think that this house moving tradition is specific to late nineteenth and early twentieth century North America. In fact, it was common in other cultures and countries for centuries. Richard Gough, in his description of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century English village of Myddle, reveals that architectural alteration was very much a part of that community:

Richard Maddocks was a carpenter by trade, and an ingenious workman, but he was very slow, or as some said idle, so that few men employed him, and therefore he left his trade and turned carrier; but the death of an old horse broke him. He pulled down the barn which was at his house over against the litch gates, and set it up for a dwelling house (on a piece of ground that belonged to his tenement) at the foot of Myddle hill, near Pembroke's gate, and there he sold ale....¹³

George Ewart Evans, the English folklife scholar, discusses the system of marking used in the framing of a house and barn, making them easy to reassemble if necessary. He also points out that timber framed houses were often moved in the Suffolk district.¹⁴ Likewise, an anthropologist examined the mobility of residents and residences in the village of Vanuatu, and discovered that movings and the conversion of buildings frequently occurred.¹⁵

Scholars have offered reasons why alterations and house movings occur. A study of 18th century Pennsylvania German houses, for example, concluded that movings and alterations happened "at the junctures when the farm changed hands and the new generation assumed control."¹⁶ Michael Owen Jones examined re-dos, add-ons, tear-downs, conversions and "move-ons" in a study of Los Angeles housing.

He points out that alterations involve tradition: "through the imitation or repetition of forms, design elements, materials, construction techniques — which people become aware of largely through oral communication and face-to-face interaction among friends, colleagues and acquaintances — fixer uppers exhibit continuities and consistencies in human behavior."¹⁷ Some reasons he cites for altering and moving include: to accommodate changing needs for more or different kinds of space, to make or save money, to re-establish a personal sense of self-worth, to maintain a sense of authority and degree of control over oneself and one's possessions, to attain intellectual and sensory goals, to actualize the self through symbolic statements, and to provide a basis for interaction and communication.¹⁸

These reasons do help explain some motivations behind the moving and altering of buildings, but there are also some unique local explanations. A reason often cited by present-day Codroy Valley farmers is an environmental one. The southeast winds often blow through this district at over one hundred miles per hour and, for some people, the decision to move a dwelling from one location to another is precipitated by a particularly bad storm or disastrous situation caused by extremely violent winds. Numerous oral and newspaper accounts exist, describing the damage done to various houses during storms. For example, in one wild December 1924 gale:

The wind was driven with awful velocity wrecking the beautiful house of Mr. Sears Tompkins. The structure, a ten room building, was lifted clear from its concrete foundation, carried clear over a fence striking into a pasture where it tore up several feet of earth. About this time the wind seemed to freshen, rolling the building over until it came in contact with an old green house, demolishing it and smashing it into smithereens, the last vestige of the former beautiful edifice. There was not a single thing left intact about the building except a doll's cradle, owned by one of the daughters of Mrs. Tompkins, and the front door of the house.¹⁹

A disastrous storm such as this provided the impetus for this particular farmer to rebuild his home in a different location. Chimneys and roofs of houses were often damaged by the high southeast winds, and various Codroy Valley buildings were blown down.²⁰ In 1933, the Roman Catholic chapel in the nearby community of Highlands was blown down, and in the mid-1880s the frame for the Anglican Church in Codroy was destroyed:

A few years ago they went to work with a will, relying chiefly on their own exertions and on a promise from that noble and venerable Society for promoting Christian knowledge, which has already helped so bountifully in Newfoundland, after much labor and expense the frame was erected, but a gale of wind striking it before it was properly secured reduced it to ruin....²¹

Codroy Valley residents may well have been influenced by seeing the result of this extreme wind and may have proceeded to move to an area perceived to be a less

dangerous location. Thus, we do see at least five moves from the south side of the Little River — the area closest to the base of the Long Range mountains — where the high winds are said to funnel down from the southeast, creating havoc in the Codroy Valley. Even today it is common for tractor trailers to stop at a gasoline station or motel in this particular district of the Codroy Valley, to wait until the heavy winds subside before travelling the highway to Port Aux Basques. Moreover, numerous accounts exist of trucks being blown off the highway and trains being blown from the tracks in this district and in the nearby community of Wreck House.²² The builder of one house in a particularly windy area developed a sloped roof on his two-thirds Georgian house, to offer less resistance to the high winds (See Figure 45). While the facade of the house faces the Radio Range Road in St. Andrews, the rear of the dwelling faces the southeast and the sloping roof comes almost to ground level.

While this environmental reason is plausible, there is another social reason. Much moving and rebuilding occurred at the end of the nineteenth and turn of the twentieth century, a time when there was great optimism for residents of both the Codroy Valley and Newfoundland's entire west coast. In the 1890s, coal mining began, roads improved, and more importantly, the railroad was built. In addition to making cadastral surveys and leasing some of their granted land to Codroy farmers, the Reid Newfoundland Railway built train stations in the communities of South Branch, Doyles and St. Andrews. At least four buildings were moved to sites near the stations. These residents may have wanted to be closer to the train — the physical symbol of the outside world. People who moved closer to the stations assumed that these locations would be important centres for the valley, offering services such as general stores, post offices, churches, and community halls. In St. Andrews, where a station was located, by the turn of the twentieth century, a blacksmith shop, tourist lodge and general store were operating, and a church and hall were constructed by 1919.²³ Before the building of the Church of the Precious Blood in 1919, St. Andrews's residents were required to travel to Searston for their church services. South Branch, likewise, possessed a chapel, post office and a number of tourist cabins at the turn of the twentieth century.²⁴ The South Branch district was sparsely settled until the train came through the region. Many settlers from other Codroy Valley communities decided to move here to farm the unsettled land and to work in the coal mine operating at Coal Brook.²⁵ Many built new houses, and some may have moved buildings, although I have not, to date, documented any moves to this district. Doyles, another station location, became an important Codroy Valley distribution centre. After crossing the river by ferryboat at the community of Upper Ferry, Codroy Valley farmers from the north side of the Grand River were able to ship their produce from the station at Doyles.²⁶ The community possessed a carding mill, gasoline station, general store and grocery store by the 1970s. The provincial government situated one of two provincial tourist campsites in Doyles, near the Grand Codroy River, on the abandoned site of the Tom Doyle farm. While the train was a lure, these other services also influenced the decision to move from one community to another.

While the train opened new markets for Codroy Valley produce and cattle, it also brought the outside world to the region. Wealthy American sportsmen came to fish the plentiful trout and salmon in summer, hunt moose and caribou in winter, and to experience the rugged outdoors of Newfoundland. These early tourists offered cash to Codroy Valley residents for serving as guides while a number of Codroy Valley residents constructed lodges, cabins and small hotels to accommodate these guests.

A third possible reason for house movings is a social one. Some farmers say buildings were moved because of animosities between neighbours. Paul Joseph O'Quinn, a former carpenter states, "When one fellow would fall out with his neighbour, well, he'd haul his house away, and then when he'd get good friends with him again, he'd haul it back."²⁷ Another explanation given for this phenomenon is that moving buildings was a way for farmers to relieve boredom in the slower times of the year. The wintertime was indeed a slow period for the Codroy Valley farmer; once the wood was cut and stacked, buildings repaired, and preparations made for the next season, activities on the farm slowed down. It is in the winter when Codroy Valley farmers and their families were able to indulge in activities such as horseracing on the river ice and evening card games — pursuits not able to be enjoyed at other times of year. It was at this time when many alterations of outbuildings and homes occurred.

But these explanations for movings — feuds with neighbours and boredom — may well be the rhetorical stance of present-day people, who are trying to comprehend and make sense of a distant past. The actual reasons for many of these moves are long forgotten, and these rhetorical statements in contemporary conversations help to provide a connection with past relatives and neighbours. These explanations about house movings may well be a part of the whole complex of subtle ways in which one community develops its identity.

Marriage or deaths were yet other reasons for a house moving. Tom Luedee's house, for example, was moved from Tompkins to St. Andrews shortly after he was remarried. His old house in a new location, for him, symbolized a new beginning in a new relationship. His Roman Catholic faith also influenced the move in that he consciously relocated his house close to the St. Andrews Catholic Church, so he and his wife could have easy church access when they grew older. Joseph Campbell, a resident of New Waterford, Cape Breton Island, but originally from the Codroy Valley, bought a house in 1953 when the owner died and moved it to Campbell's Creek (near Tompkins) to be used as a summer cabin.

Another important reason movings occur is that Codroy Valley residents continue to follow a tradition of reusing materials. Just as quilters or mat hookers readily employ older pieces of clothing to produce a new product, Codroy Valley people re-use older buildings for new purposes. For example, when the Searston post office was abandoned in 1950, Nicholas Luedee bought it and moved it to his farm in Loch Lomond (See Figure 78). Similarly, when the two houses owned by the Canadian federal government on the Range Road, St. Andrews, were abandoned in 1965, they were bought and moved to Upper Ferry, to be modified for a convent.



Figure 78. Old Searston post office moved by Nicholas Luedee, Loch Lomond.

The conversion of buildings or re-use of their components is a common form of Codroy Valley alteration. For example, Frank O'Quinn's storage barn in Searston is comparable in size to the sheep barns that dot the valley. Closer inspection reveals that it was once a house, and oral evidence indicates it was Frank's grandfather's house, constructed shortly after the period of Codroy Valley migration. According to family tradition, a log dwelling was constructed near the bank of the Grand Codroy River. This frame dwelling was the second home, constructed a few years after the log house. This use of the older house as a barn when a new building was constructed was common in the Codroy Valley. Other examples of this form of conversion include Ned Gale's barn in South Branch, once John MacNeil's house (Figures 79), Joe Gale's barn in Millville and Bernard Benoit's barn in O'Regans (Figure 80). The Dan Gale house in O'Regan's has had major changes in its façade. The central doorway was replaced by windows in the process of transforming it from a dwelling to a hen house (Figure 81). St. Anne's Church in Searston, built in 1931 under the direction of Monsignor Sears, was torn down in 1982 (Figures 82 and 83). Its salvageable parts were re-used in the construction of a new church in the northern peninsula of Newfoundland.

Converting older buildings to new purposes was common. Adding one or more rooms to the sides or rears of buildings was also a popular alteration. Kettle's store in Searston (once Tommy Blanchard's house) shows a multitude of additions



Figure 79.
*Ned Gale's barn in
South Branch, once
John MacNeil's house.*



Figure 80.
*Bernard Benoit's barn in
O'Regans.*



Figure 81.
Dan Gale's hen house.



Figure 82.
St. Anne's church, Searston.



Figure 83. *St. Anne's church, Searston being torn down, 1982.*

to the side, rear and front (Figure 84). Another popular alteration at the turn of the twentieth century was adding porches to facades of buildings.

As with building movings, enlarging dwellings or, as Alan Gowans calls it, "the addition principle," was also common in other areas of the western world.²⁸ This need by Codroy Valley farmers to create more space by adding to existing dwellings indicates a growing sense of individuality and a newly perceived need for private space which seemed to prevail throughout North America at this period.²⁹

While additions were common, subtractions were yet another major form of Codroy Valley alteration. Smaller houses were the norm in the early years of the twentieth century because of rural depopulation and the popularity of one-storey bungalows. Rather than build new houses, some Codroy Valley residents chose to cut down their older one and one-half and two storey houses, transforming them into one-storey dwellings. William Roach's house in Searston, for example, was a one and one-half storey Cape Cod variant, built in 1902. It was cut down in the 1940s, giving it a new height and roof (Figure 85).

Parallel to this process, roofs were often raised to provide extra bedrooms upstairs, giving the roofline a flatter appearance. At the turn of the twentieth century through to the 1930s and 40s, flatter roofs were more popular. This may have resulted from the introduction of the bungalow form. Perhaps one of the most radically altered roofs in the Codroy Valley is Allan McArthur's house in Upper Ferry. Allan McArthur's late nineteenth century house, was a one and one-half storey house with a gothic peak and gingerbread trim (Figure 86). In the 1920s,

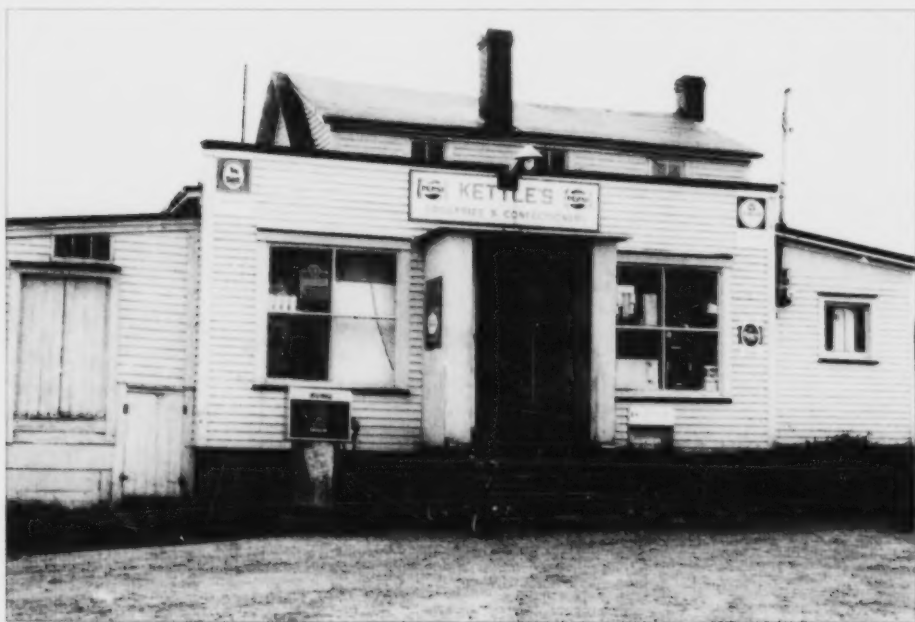


Figure 84. Kettle's store in Searston, once Tommy Blanchard's house.

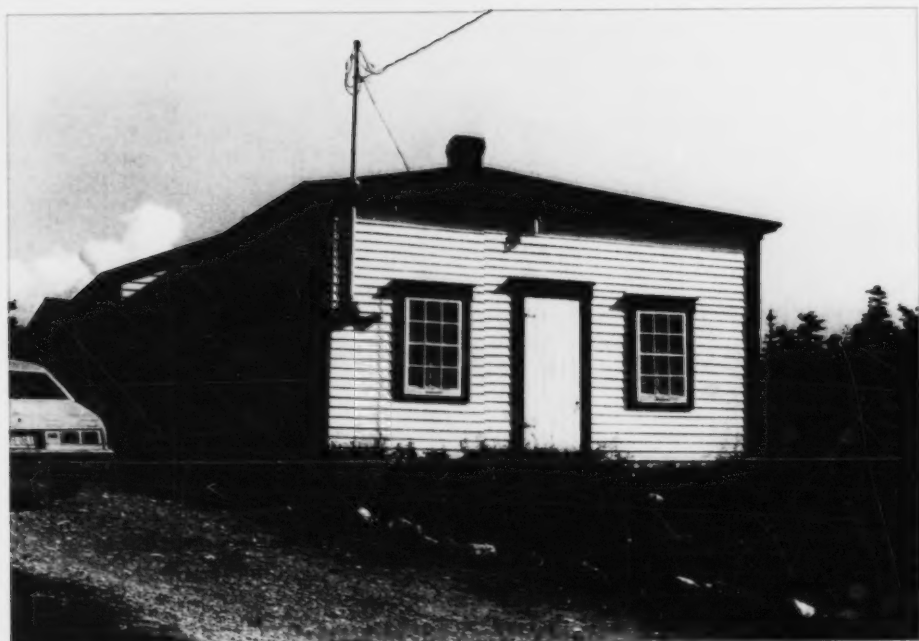


Figure 85. William Roach's house, Searston.



Figure 86. Allan MacArthur's house, Upper Ferry.

the roof was raised, altering its appearance drastically, and in 1949, a back kitchen was added (Figure 87). Today, the only evidence of its former appearance is the ornamental pediment over the door and the ornate window surrounds.

While there are many reasons for house movings, there are many explanations for minor and major alterations. Minor alterations such as repainting or repapering walls, reshingling or reclapboarding the sheathing, or replacing of older windows with newer ones, regularly occurred from the time of initial settlement, as finances allowed. However, substantial renovations occurred at specific times. When more space was needed in a home, a major alteration might occur. Archie Francis McIsaac cut his own wood and built his own house the year he was married, in 1932. In 1970, the year his daughter was married, he built an addition on the house. He thought that with this marriage bringing a new member to his family — his daughter's husband — and the possibility of grandchildren coming into his life, more space was needed. Likewise, Nicholas Luedee in Loch Lomond built his house in 1935, and added two bedrooms and a bathroom to the side in 1947, as his family grew (Figure 88). In 1975, he replaced the older four-paned windows with aluminum sliding windows because, at this time, he was financially able to purchase these new windows which were advertised as cost-saving, efficient products.

While extra bathrooms (in the 1940s, 50s and 60s) and bedrooms were common additions, kitchens were also frequently enlarged after the initial house construction. These extra kitchen spaces were often located in a side addition. With larger families and the continued use of the kitchen as the main room, house owners sometimes saw a need to expand this particular room.

In contrast to the additions, many of the subtractions were a response to changes in architectural fashion in the outside world. For example, the outside



Figure 87. Altered Alan MacArthur's house.

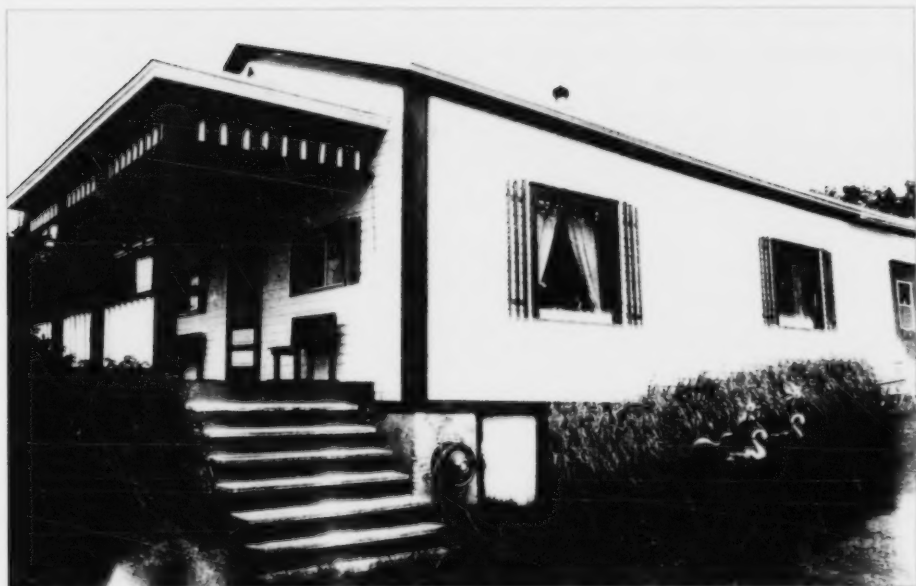


Figure 88. Nicholas Leuder's bungalow, Loch Lomond.

bungalow form emerged in the Codroy Valley by the 1920s. Many builders chose this house type for their new homes, but others, who lived in older homes, converted their dwellings into bungalow forms by removing the second storey. When I was first conducting fieldwork in some of these bungalows, I was confused because I was finding older technologies such as mortise and tenon framing, and hand-hewed plates and floor joists in this twentieth century form. People often made decisions to convert to a bungalow when children were married, or living away from the family home. The residents often explained that a bungalow is easier to heat than an older one and one-half storey or two-storey house.

Codroy Valley resident Allan McArthur, a well-known Gaelic tradition bearer and preserver of Gaelic lore, decided not to reduce his house to a one storey form, but to alter its appearance radically by changing its roof. Nevertheless, he was also reacting to architectural trends and community aesthetic. Flat and shallow pitched roofs, from the turn of the twentieth century until well into the 1950s and 60s, became one of the more popular roof forms of the district. Bungalows were frequently built with this roof type, as were the two-storey, biscuit box houses that are now ubiquitous in Newfoundland. Allan McArthur, in modifying his late nineteenth century gothic revival house was, in essence, keeping up with current architectural fashion.

We sometimes have a static image of the past, one that is often fostered in our historic sites.³⁰ Many of our designated historic buildings in Atlantic Canada are never viewed as having been altered with the passage of time. Our local historical societies, government agencies, and interested preservationists attempt to find

the "original" form of the house, completely ignoring the succeeding years and generations that lived in the house. Anne Falkner expresses an attitude toward buildings common amongst preservationists: "The all-inclusive rule... do not diminish architectural detail or humiliate the original principle or character of the building; do not destroy its integrity; do not alter, modernize, or add discordant details to the facade of the structure."³¹ This static view is an erroneous assumption, and, even in the eighteenth century, as Hugh Prince points out, "householders and shopkeepers were free and easy in their treatment of old buildings. They altered, pulled down, reconstructed and converted old structures to new uses, and they changed the exterior faces of buildings as architectural fashions changed."³² Change is not exclusive to architecture, for with the passage of time, all artifacts go through a process of alteration. Codroy Valley cartwheels, ploughs and horse-drawn hay balers, for example, have new functions, different from the ones for which they were originally designed. Many of the older agricultural implements once commonly used for ploughing the fields or collecting the valley's hay, are now displayed as items of art on lawns and fields, as a tangible link for locals and tourists to the once prosperous farming community. Likewise, music, dance and singing traditions have moved from within the domain of the house kitchen and community hall to the open-air folk festival stage — a major alteration — which may result in content and repertoire changes. Some singing traditions such as the performing of Gaelic and Acadian songs, are no longer common at parties in kitchens and community halls, yet the few remaining singers of such songs are brought to the open-air stage to perform for the community and tourists. In moving these oral traditions from the house interior or from recent memory to the open-air stage, the community is attempting to preserve these items at a time when the young find it difficult to identify with the concerns addressed in these older items of tradition.

Henry Glassie has commented, "always in process, unstoppably changing, houses record the local will, the cultural history of the people."³³ We fail "to capture the continuity of life" in a region if we do not explore the ways in which people continually manipulate their surrounding spaces.³⁴ In a figurative sense, these objects—the altered and moved buildings of the Codroy Valley — speak to us. They tell us much about what residents are thinking about, their concerns and their worldview at specific stages in their lives.

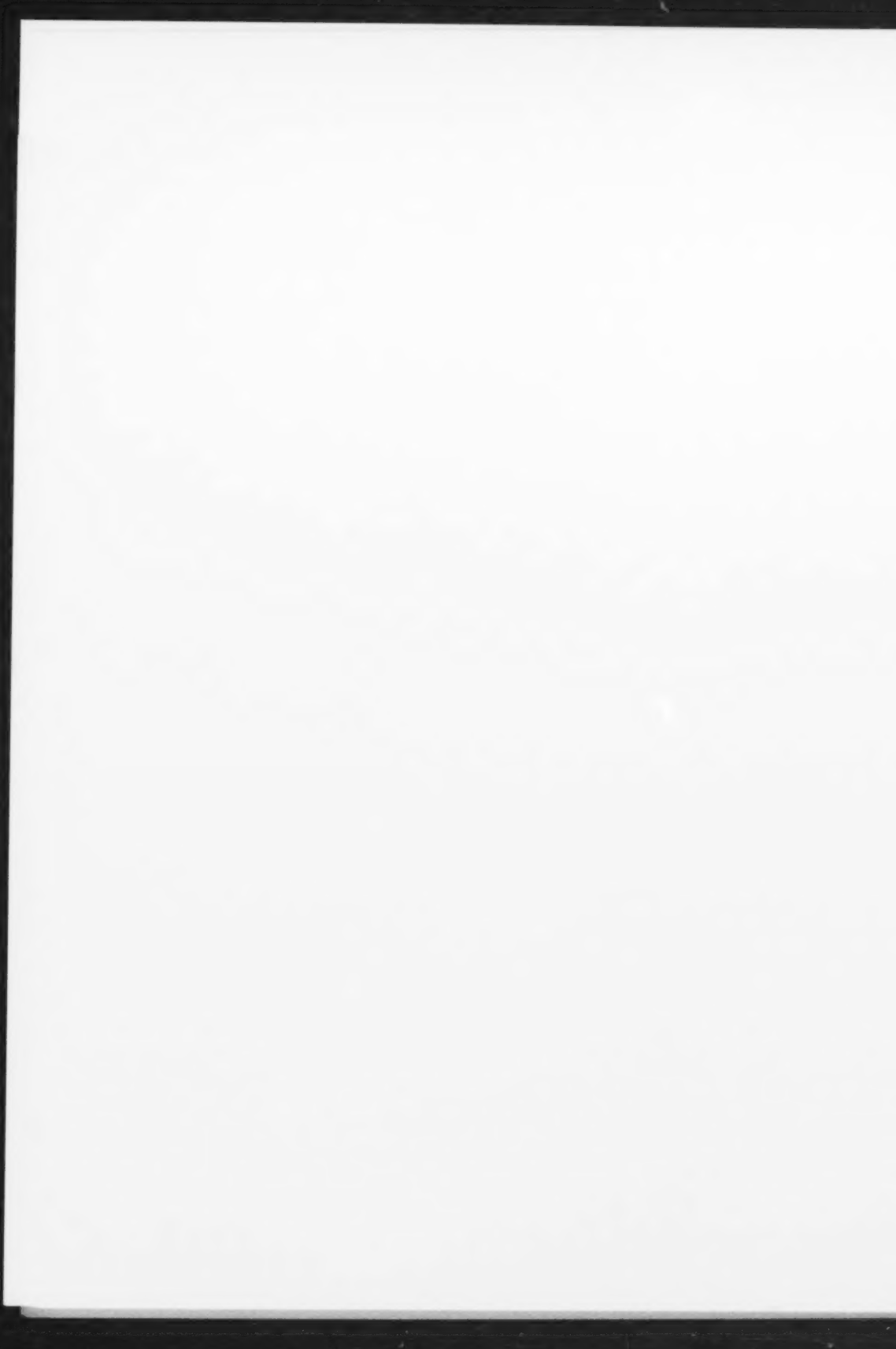
While my many visits taught me much about Codroy Valley house modifications, I came to spend a great deal of time studying one particular farm in the area, the farm of Fintan Downey on the north side of the Grand Codroy River. My long conversations with Fintan provide a closer view of the development of a farm, outlining the many changes occurring as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries progressed. Moreover, it provides an indication of some of the other buildings and work processes: in other words, a sense of the context of Codroy Valley homes. The Downey farm on Great Codroy is a representative example of the many farms that once prospered along the banks of the Grand and Little Codroy Rivers.

Notes

1. A version of this chapter has been published in a special journal issue devoted to vernacular architecture. See: Richard MacKinnon, "House Movings and Alterations: Stability and Change in the Codroy Valley Landscape," *Canadian Folklore Canadien* 17, 2 (1995), 31–50.
2. See: Thomas C. Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House Barn* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985); Peter J. Hugil, "Houses in Cazenovia: The Effects of Time and Class," *Landscape*, 24, No. 2 (1980), 10–15; David Lowenthal, "Age and Artifact: Dilemmas of Appreciation," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* ed. Donald W. Meinig (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), pp. 103–29; Bernard L. Herman, *The Stolen House* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992).
3. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, ed. *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. xx.
4. Thomas F. McIlwraith, "Altered Buildings: Another Way of Looking at the Ontario Landscape," *Ontario History*, 75, (1983), 111; see also Thomas F. McIlwraith, *Looking For Old Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
5. MUNFLA.
6. Margaret Bennett Knight, "A Codroy Valley Milling Frolic," in *Folklore Studies in Honour of Herbert Halpert: A Festschrift*, ed. Kenneth Goldstein and Neil Rosenberg (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980), pp. 99–110.
7. MUNFLA.
8. Reverend M.J. Howley, "Reminiscences of a Trip to the Western Shore of Newfoundland," *Terra Nova Advocate*, 9 February 1882, p. 4.
9. See: Aubrey Tizzard, *On Sloping Ground: Reminiscences of Outport Life in Notre Dame Bay, Newfoundland*, Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Publications, Community Studies No. 2, ed. John D.A. Widdowson (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979), pp. 214–17; for two interviews discussing house moving in Cape Breton Island see: "Dan Alex MacLeod: 'I Moved Houses,'" *Cape Breton's Magazine*, 35 (1984), 13–19; "A Visit With Mary and William Crowdis," *Cape Breton's Magazine*, 30 (1981), pp. 1, 31–35.
10. Charles Martin, "Howard Acree's Chimney: The Dilemma of Innovation," *Pioneer America*, 15 (1983), 40.
11. Victor Konrad and Michael Chaney, "Madawaska Twin Barn," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 5 (1984), p. 68.
12. Hubka, *Big House*, p. 139.
13. Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle* (1706; London: MacDonald Futura Publishers, 1981), p. 95.
14. George Ewart Evans, *The Pattern Under the Plough* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 33.

15. Margaret C. Rodman, "Moving Houses: Residential Mobility and the Mobility of Residences in Longana, Vanuatu," *American Anthropologist*, 87 (1985), 56-72.
16. Yvonne J. Milspaw, "Reshaping Tradition: Changes to Pennsylvania German Folk Houses," *Pioneer America*, 15 (1983), 71.
17. Michael Owen Jones, "L.A. Add-ons and Re-dos: Renovation in Folk Art and Architectural Design," in *Perspectives on American Folk Art*, ed. Ian M.G. Quimby and Scott T. Swank (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), p. 328.
18. Jones, pp. 331-37.
19. "Terrific Gale Hits Little River," *Western Star*, 24 December 1924, p.1.
20. For example, a report in the newspaper indicates that the chimney of the postal telegraph office in St. Andrews was blown down in 1926. *Western Star*, 27 January 1926. Another report in 1925 questions the validity of putting a road near Tompkins because, "All the old settlers that we have consulted say that the closer that you get to the mountains the more dangerous the south and southeast winds are.... It is a common occurrence to see water spouts going up in the air from ponds near the mountains where the present survey is...." *Western Star*, 23 December 1925. A newspaper report in 1909 mentions some buildings which were blown over: "Quite a storm raged here last week but little damage resulted with the exception of a few small buildings blowing over which can easily be placed in position again." *Western Star*, 10 March 1909, p.2.
21. "Gale at Highlands," *Western Star*, 15 February 1933, p. 3; *Evening Mercury*, 22 December 1888, p. 4. "A number of fires are also said to have been fanned by the gale force winds of the district. One of the more memorable fires in living memory is the burning of the first St. Anne's church in Searston on September 22, 1930. After the spire was struck by lightning, there was a great attempt to extinguish the flames, but due to the high winds, this attempt was unsuccessful," *Western Star*, 24 September 1930, p. 3. The glebe house next to this church, used by Reverend Monsignor Thomas Sears, was also burned during a heavy wind in 1884: "The arrival of the Steamer Curlew has brought some particulars of the deplorable loss suffered by Monsignor Sears in the burning of his splendid house. This mansion which, after his 20 years of missionary labor, he had succeeding in erecting, was a truly elegant structure, neat in design and ample in accommodation. The fire was caused by the igniting of a mattress placed to air before the kitchen fire...." *Evening Telegram*, 24 June 1888, p.5. After the fire, Reverend Sears had to abide in the old glebe house, which at this date, was being used as a barn.
22. For a description of the wild winds in this area see; Michael MacKenzie, "Lauchie MacDougall: The Wreck House Human Wind Gauge," in *Remember the Time... True Stories Old and New* (Grand Falls, Newfoundland: Robinson, Blackmore Printing, 1981), pp. 71-81.
23. See for example: *Western Star*, 3 September 1913; *Western Star*, 28 March 1917.
24. *Western Star*, 4 November 1908; *Western Star*, 2 June 1915; *Western Star*, 3 July 1907.

25. For descriptions of the South Branch coal mining operations see: *Western Star*, 10 November 1920; *Western Star*, 2 February 1921; *Western Star*, 8 June 1921.
26. This community is called Upper Ferry because it was one of the two ferry boat locations on the Grand River. The other ferry was located at the "Gut", Searston, and was referred to as "Lower Ferry." The present-day bridge crossing the river is located at Upper Ferry.
27. MUNFLA.
28. See: Alan Gowans, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.16.
29. Milspaw, "Reshaping," p. 79.
30. For a short assessment of Atlantic Canadian interpretations of the past see: Peter E. Rider, ed., *The History of Atlantic Canada: Museum Interpretations*, Mercury Series, History Division Paper, No. 32, (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981). David Lowenthal discusses the urge to reconstitute the past by restoring a building to what it might or should have been: David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 278-82.
31. Anne Falkner, *Without Our Past?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 121.
32. Hugh Prince, "Revivals, Restoration, Preservation: Changing Views About Antique Landscape Features," in *Our Past Before Us? Why Do We Save It?* ed. David Lowenthal and Marcus Binney (London: Temple Smith, 1982), pp. 33-49.
33. Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community*, Publications of the American Folklore Society, Vol. 4 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 1982) p. 379.
34. McIlwraith, "Altered Buildings," p. 111.



CHAPTER 7

A View from the Farm: The Context of Codroy Valley Homes



While house movings and alterations are important features of the Codroy Valley building tradition, the typical pattern of farm development is equally significant. Most houses are only part of a complex of buildings and activities that develop over time. A case study of one family farm provides the community and work context needed to understand this progression. The Downey farm, on the north side of the Grand Codroy River about five miles from the river mouth, offers a sense of the home's relationship to other buildings and activities of a Codroy Valley farmstead. I study the Downey farm from its pioneer stage and examine the farm's modifications over time. The farm had two periods of rebuilding — at the end of the nineteenth century and in the 1940s and 50s.

When Cape Bretoners migrated to the Codroy Valley — from approximately 1840 to 1860 — some settlers were already living in this region. Reports indicate that Mi'kmaq and Beothuk Indians resided on the Grand Codroy River near the present-day community of Great Codroy and around Codroy Pond.¹ One area on the north side of the Grand River, the site of the present Roman Catholic graveyard, is still referred to as "Indian Hill," after the aboriginal settlers; this designation appears on an 1860 map of the district.² The first non-native settlers were a group of twelve English families who lived at the mouth of the Grand Codroy River, and who fished cod and salmon, traded with coastal schooners, and trapped the region's fur-bearing animals.³ The gravestones of some of these settlers — the Gales — can still be seen in an abandoned graveyard in a wooded area along the north bank of the Grand Codroy River, a few hundred yards from the river mouth (Figure 89).

Michael Downey came from Ireland to St. John's, Newfoundland, in the early years of the nineteenth century. He came to the Codroy Valley in 1846, following his brother James who had settled in the Codroy Valley by 1842.⁴ We are told that Michael bought land and a building called a "hut" from an Indian for twenty shillings and began fishing and tilling the soil.⁵

By 1866, he had a house and barn on the site, and occupied three hundred acres with fifteen under cultivation. He owned a horse at this time, along with eleven cows, four yoke oxen, ten head of cattle, three pigs and forty-five sheep — thirty of which he had kept for the winter. In the spring of 1866, he had a problem with wolves destroying some of his lambs. Moreover, he tried growing wheat this year, but found it to be an uncertain crop in the climate of this region. However, he had great success with oats and barley, producing twenty-five barrels of each in 1865, and discovered that flax grew very well on his farm. He planted ten barrels of potatoes in 1866 and sold two cwt. [hundred weight] of butter to his neighbors and to traders in the nearby community of Channel. Moreover, he tanned thirty

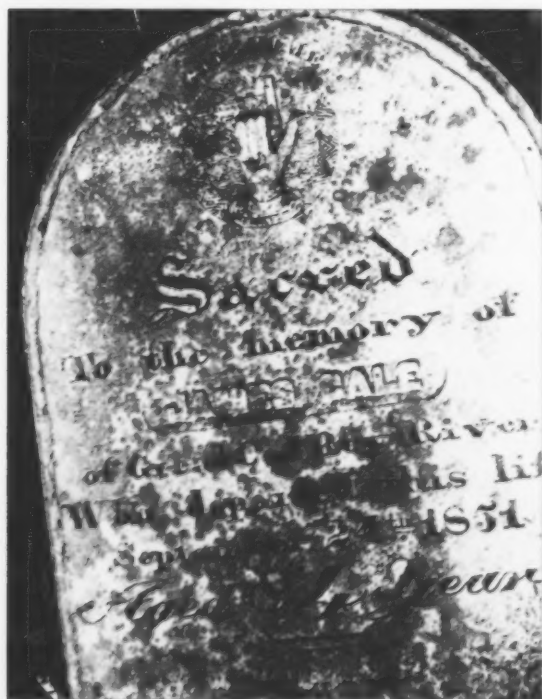


Figure 89.
Gravestone of James Gale, Great Codroy River, died 1851 at 84 years.

ox hides and calfskins, which took twelve and three months respectively before being ready for use. Through tanning, weaving and spinning, he manufactured much of the clothing he and his family required.⁶

His brother James' farm was situated two miles up the river, and bordered on the farm of Denis Ryan who kept fifty sheep, ten cows, some oxen and grew more than twenty tons of hay.⁷ At this period, Michael Downey's farm was one of fifty-four on the north and south sides of the Grand Codroy River. Of the fifty-four, ten lived solely by farming; the rest, in addition to farming, caught small amounts of salmon, codfish and caplin. In 1866, the total sale of butter to traders from Channel amounted to five tons; in this year, farmers received one shilling per pound for butter, which was payable in goods. The Channel traders regularly visited the Codroy River to barter fish and manufactured goods with the local farmers for sheep, cows, cattle and butter.⁸

Much of the hay grown on Codroy Valley farms by this time was wild grass from the low, intervale land along the banks of the river, and on the low-lying islands within the river. It was mowed early in August, and put into stacks and hay barracks where it remained until the river froze over. It was then brought to the various farms by horse and oxen.⁹

A geological surveyor, Alexander Murray, pointed out in 1867 that the Codroy Valley was about seventy-five square miles or approximately 48,000 square acres,

most of which was well wooded.¹⁰ The Codroy Valley farmer had a variety of trees such as spruce, balsam fir, yellow birch, white birch and tamarack on his farm at this period. Much of the barren, swampy marshland, where bakeapples flourished, had no timber, but rather small tamarack bushes and a stunted growth of evergreen.¹¹

By 1871, both the Downey brothers had well-established farms in the community of Great Codroy. By this time, Michael and James had twelve and fourteen children respectively. Both brothers also annually dealt £50 worth of produce with the traders from nearby Channel, and estimated that their farms were worth £1050 and £1250 respectively, a little more than what the average Codroy Valley farm was worth at this time.¹²

The Downey brothers and their children must have been well-respected members of the Codroy Valley community, for throughout the 1870s and 80s, they were regular petitioners to the St. John's government, representing their fellow Codroy Valley farmers. For example, in 1873, Patrick Downey, Michael's son, petitioned the House of Assembly for governmental representation and a grant to build a road from the Codroy Valley to Channel.¹³ When Sir John Howley Glover became Governor and Commander in Chief for Newfoundland in 1876, Michael, James and Patrick Downey were again amongst the list of people from the Codroy Rivers offering congratulations in a letter published in a St. John's newspaper.¹⁴

Throughout the 1870s and 80s, the Downey brothers continued to be signatories to petitions as well as principal petitioners to the Newfoundland government for the improvement of the Codroy Valley community. When Captain Howarth was appointed judicial representative for Newfoundland's West Coast, James Downey was one of eighty-one Codroy Valley farmers who signed a letter welcoming him and thanking him for this service.¹⁵ Likewise, Michael Downey was the chief petitioner for the construction and repair of Codroy Valley roads in 1878, 1879 and 1881.¹⁶ Michael's son, James, born in 1857 and called after Michael's brother, took over the farm at this period, when his father was unable to continue operating it.¹⁷

James P. Howley conducted a survey of Codroy Valley lands in 1883 and discovered that ninety-three lots were being farmed on the Grand Codroy River, having an average size of 163 acres for a total of 15,204 acres.¹⁸ Even though much of the Codroy Valley land was not granted, it was occupied. A surveyor summarized the situation in 1884 by remarking, "a very large area of land is here found to be in possession of or claimed by persons under what they term, 'squatter's rights'," and suggested there be a special inquiry into this matter.¹⁹ Howley initially intended on his trip to the Codroy Valley in 1883 to lay off the entire valley's lands on the American Township system of blocks of thirty-six square miles each. Upon arrival, he discovered that much of the land was already occupied, and consequently was not able to follow his plan. Instead, he decided to define the boundaries and extent of the various occupied farm lots, but received opposition from Codroy Valley farmers who were opposed to this systematic survey. Only with the influence and support of Monsignor Sears was Howley able to accomplish his task. His survey enabled Codroy Valley residents to apply for and obtain title for their land, but it was not until the 1890s that many Codroy Valley residents received their official

land grants, even though some had occupied the land since the mid-century.²⁰ James Downey, Senior and Michael Downey both received their 160-acre land grants on 6 December 1894.²¹ By 1896 two of James's sons — Thomas and Patrick — had received land grants of one hundred and forty and one hundred and fifty-four acres respectively.²² By this time James was appointed way officer for the Great Codroy Valley post office, receiving a remuneration of eight dollars per year.²³

James Downey, son of Michael, was operating the family farm at this turn-of-the-century period (Figure 90). Though a farmer, he also lists himself as a Port Master for the Grand Codroy River in the 1921 nominal census.²⁴ He was sixty-four years old in 1921, a widower, and his thirty year old son, Alban, had taken over the family farm, although James still lived with Alban and his family. Alban and his wife Rose had seven children between 1920 and 1930: Bertram, Kevin, Fintan, Aloysius, Margaret, Walter and Robert. In addition to their seven children, Alban's single aunt, Anastasia, 68 years old, and his single brother, Bertram, 27 years old were living in Alban's house with the family. By 1935, Anastasia had died and Bertram had started his own family on a nearby farm.²⁵



Figure 90. Downey farm at turn of twentieth century.

Alban Downey began recording some of the details surrounding the operation of his family farm in 1918, and sporadically wrote entries until 1958, providing an intimate view of life on a Codroy Valley farm at this period.²⁶ The diary portrays the daily and annual activities on the farm, the degree of economic interaction with local farmers and merchants, and a sense of the variety of occupations prevalent in the Codroy Valley. Mr. Downey begins his diary with a curt entry for February 1918: "Cut about 200 poles." The winter months were a time when wood was accumulated for both repairing buildings and fences on the farm, obtaining necessary firewood for heating and cooking, and gathering materials for any extra off-farm work which might be available. On 3 April, he records that his tender for repairing the "B. Bridge" was accepted and adds on 20 April: "Finished (practically) cutting, hewing and putting scantling for B.B." B. Bridge is what is locally called Broomman's Brook, a brook flowing from the Anguille Mountains to the Grand Codroy River, near the community of Great Codroy.

By the end of March and throughout April we begin to see the arrival of new animals at the Downey farm: 25 March, "Beauty Calved (B) [Bull];" 31 March, "Blackie calved (B) [Bull];" "Liddy calved (H) [Heifer];" 24 April, "four new lambs. Started in feeding three calves on barley and oats;" and 1 May, "Bloss calved." The springtime brought both new forms of life, as well as death to the Downey farm, for between March and May, three sheep and a pair of lambs died; however, we are not given information about what caused these deaths.

With May came the end of cutting wood, calving and caring for newly born cattle; but it also brought the time for the preparing of fields, planting, and the selling of the farm's produce or meat to neighbours and merchants. By 13 May, Mr Downey "Sowed 3/4s of an acre in wheat," on the 14th, "sowed nearly one acre in oats," and on the 15th, "sowed four pounds of peas." On 21 May he planted 3 and 3/4 barrels of "D. Blues," 1/3rd of a barrel of "cobblers," 1 and 3/4s of a barrel of "calicoes" and two gallons of "E. Roses" totalling six barrels; in total, the potato planting consumed one hundred and five loads of manure. In addition to potatoes, at this time, he also planted barley, flax and turnip.

June was the month for sheep shearing and for readying and marking lambs for butchering. Unfortunately, Alban stops writing in his diary on 18 June, just after sowing a few barrels of barley, perhaps because he became very busy with farm work in the summer months. He does not resume his writing until 12 December when he records the selling of 941 pounds of beef to D.M. McIsaac for \$188.00. In the interim, he was undoubtedly busy making hay, butchering cattle, gathering his crops and selling any of his surplus butter, potatoes and beef to neighbors and merchants.

In 1919, we see the commercial network to which he belonged. By 13 June, Mr. Downey "sent to J.H. Pike six barrels of potatoes at the cost of \$4.00 per barrel," and on the 15th sold forty-nine pounds of beef to Alex Gale, the merchant in Millville, for \$10.78. On 21 June he filled his first thirty-three pound butter tub and sold it on the 24th to Mr. Gale for \$18.00. In addition to butter, he sold fifty-seven pounds of veal and two barrels of potatoes to merchant Gale and brought his wool to Gale's Woolen mill for carding and rolling. One week later, on 1 July, Alban returned from Gale's mill in Millville with thirty-seven pounds of rolled wool.

While Mr. Downey sold much of his farm produce and meat to Mr. Gale, the merchant was by no means Alban's only buyer. Mr. Downey sold potatoes and butter to his neighbour Christena Jennings, and sold butter, carcasses of animals and hides to individuals such as C.P. Eagan, Ruban King and A.D. McIsaac (a merchant in St. Andrews). In addition, he wrote on November 5th that he "put fourteen barrels, 129 pounds of turnips aboard McLean's schooner at the cost of \$3.25 a barrel," and loaded another \$90.55 worth of potatoes on board the schooner on 7 November. John MacLean's schooner, the *Jane Anderson*, was plying around St. George's Bay, across the Cabot Strait to and from Cape Breton, along the south coast of Newfoundland, and across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Prince Edward Island and other mainland Nova Scotia ports. A newspaper reports in 1921 that it ran ashore in Francois Harbour while on the way from the Codroy Valley to Grand Bank with a load of Codroy Valley potatoes.²⁷ In 1919, Mr. Downey states he made a total income from the farm of \$776.50.

In addition to providing an indication of the yearly round of activities on the farm, and the small scale commercial activity occurring, Downey's diary provides us with a glimpse of the co-operative nature of Codroy Valley farmwork. On 29 December 1919 Mr. Downey stated that "M. Farrel had his horse with us hauling four loads of oats" and they continued hauling oats and hay on December 30th and 31. And again on 14 January 1920, we see how one neighbour assists another: "Andrew Benoit with us putting up kelp — 12 loads." Kelp was used both for fertilizer and for insulating the foundations of dwellings without cellars. By 24 February 1920 Downey stated: "All the kelp hauled."

In 1928, Mr. Downey condenses his diary citations; from this date until 1958, he summarizes the yearly activities on the farm on one page in the diary per year. Consequently, many details about daily farm life are excluded. Nevertheless, there is statistical information included, such as the number of sheep sheared, the number of calves born, the number of lambs marked for butchering and the amount of crops sold per year.

While this diary describes the activities common on the farm, other sources such as historical photographs, newspaper accounts and the physical landscape itself, offer further insights into the way the Downey farm developed. These indicate there were three major periods of development: 1) the mid-nineteenth century, 2) end of the nineteenth century, and 3) the 1940s and 1950s. During the initial period of settlement, in the late 1840s, Michael Downey built his house and barn close to the river, although the exact location of the buildings has not been established because of the extensive ploughing in this area in later years. The Grand Codroy River was, at this time, the roadway in winter and summer. Flat-bottomed riverboats were used for travel in summer, and oxen and carts, or, in later years, horses and sleighs, in winter.

By the end of the nineteenth century, James built a new house and some small barns, a few hundred yards away from the first house and higher up on the gentle hill. This brought the buildings of the Downey farm closer to the newly built road going through the settlement (Figure 91). A photograph taken in the late 1920s shows the many stumps situated on the land surrounding the house, indicating that the farm was still being cleared (Figure 92).

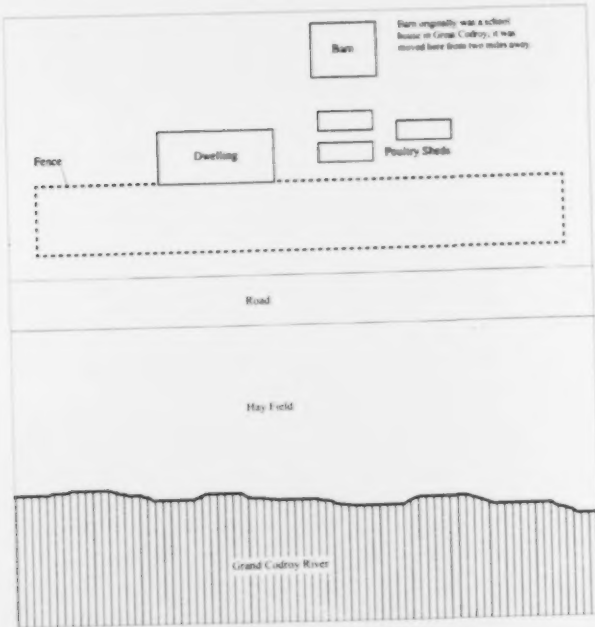


Figure 91.
Drawing, Downey farm 1890s.



Figure 92.
Downey farm showing stumps, 1920.

The early years of the twentieth century were very busy on the Downey farm. By the 1920s, Alban was selling railway carloads of vegetables in Port aux Basques and St. John's, and young colts and an 800 pound horse to his fellow Codroy Valley farmers.²⁸ Throughout this period, and well into the 1940s, most Codroy Valley farms, including Alban Downey's had horse-drawn farm machinery. These machines were introduced to the region at the turn of the twentieth century. Gasoline-powered tractors were not common in the Codroy Valley until the 1950s. A survey of Codroy Valley farm machinery indicates that, by 1945, Alban Downey's farm had a horse-drawn mowing machine, raking machine, potato digger, cultivator, walking plough, a two wheeled farm cart, a four wheeled wagon, a cream separator, and two spinning wheels.²⁹ By the 1950s, the Downeys were operating a small sawmill in their back pasture for their own use and for their friends and neighbors.

The buildings on the Downey farm were being modified at the end of the nineteenth century. By the turn of the twentieth century a new house was constructed close to the road, about four hundred yards north of the river. A building was moved to this site to be used as a barn. It was originally a schoolhouse, situated two miles down the road (Figure 93). Sitting on a fieldstone foundation, it is sixteen by twenty-two feet, and now consists of one large storage room. The vertical studs within the building are all hand-hewed, spaced three feet apart, and are mortised and tenoned into the wall plate and sill. It was transformed first from a schoolhouse to a barn, then to a wagon shed, and finally, to its present state as a storage shed. Three small sheds next to the barn served as hen houses. The field adjacent to the river was the hay field while the family garden was in the fenced area in front of the house.



Figure 93. Downey barn, originally a schoolhouse.

By the 1950s a number of alterations occurred on the Downey farm (Figure 94). In 1954, the house was modified significantly by Fintan, Alban and two carpenters — Chris Evans and Ken Bragg. They replaced a peaked roof with a shallow pitched roof and added a two-storey back addition replacing the single storey back shed (Figure 95). A new hen house was added to the assortment of poultry sheds at this

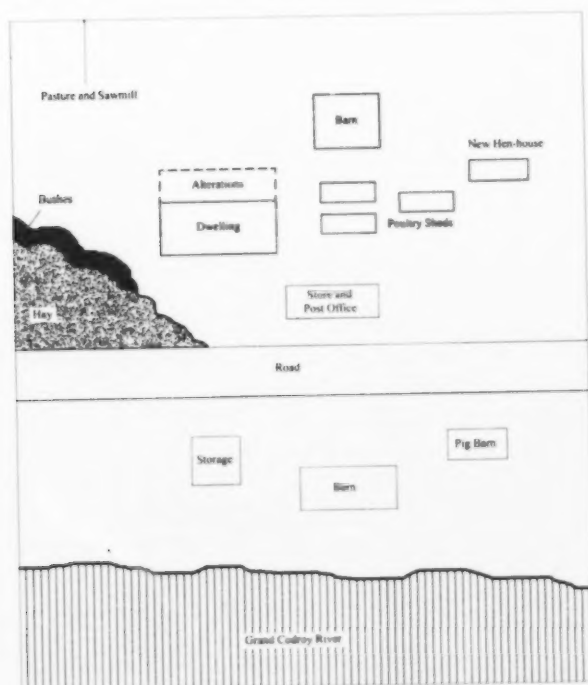


Figure 94.
Drawing of Downey farm, 1950s.



Figure 95. *Modifications to Downey house.*

time (Figure 96). A new machinery storage shed and pig barn was added in the 1940s, below the road through the settlement. The original barn became a wagon shed and a new bank barn — a unique type in the Codroy Valley — was constructed below the main road (Figure 97).

Mike J. Downey, a former schoolteacher and nephew of Alban's, who was an architect and engineer with the Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Company, designed this barn. He specialized in designing woods camps for this company through the



Figure 96. St. Thomas's school, Great Codroy.



Figure 97. Downey farm.

1930s and 40s. By the 1950s, he became one of Corner Brook's best known architects, designing buildings such as the Co-operative Store, the Newfoundland Tractor and Equipment Company Building, the Curling Church, and the Corner Brook Country Club.³⁰ This form of barn was foreign to the Codroy Valley building repertoire. Until this time, Codroy Valley farmers mainly built what are commonly referred to as English barns. Only one other farmer — Frank O'Quinn from Searston — copied this form when deciding to construct a new barn in the 1950s. Another small building near the main house was constructed to house a small confectionery store and post office operated by Alban and his family (Figure 98).

By the 1980s, Alban's son Fintan was operating the farm. Fintan moved the small store and post office from close to the house to the nearby road in 1950. He added a back addition to transform the building into a blacksmith's shop. In this same year, he removed the second storey of the machinery shed next to the barn and added a small section to the west side of the building. By 1983, Fintan moved one of the hen houses from beside the house to behind the house, to be used as a storage shed.

The Downey farm was one of the more progressive farms of the valley. By the 1950s the Downeys were expecting better times ahead with the advent of Canadian confederation and proceeded to purchase more modern farm machinery. The valley's first tractor — a McCormick Farm All — was purchased by the Downeys in

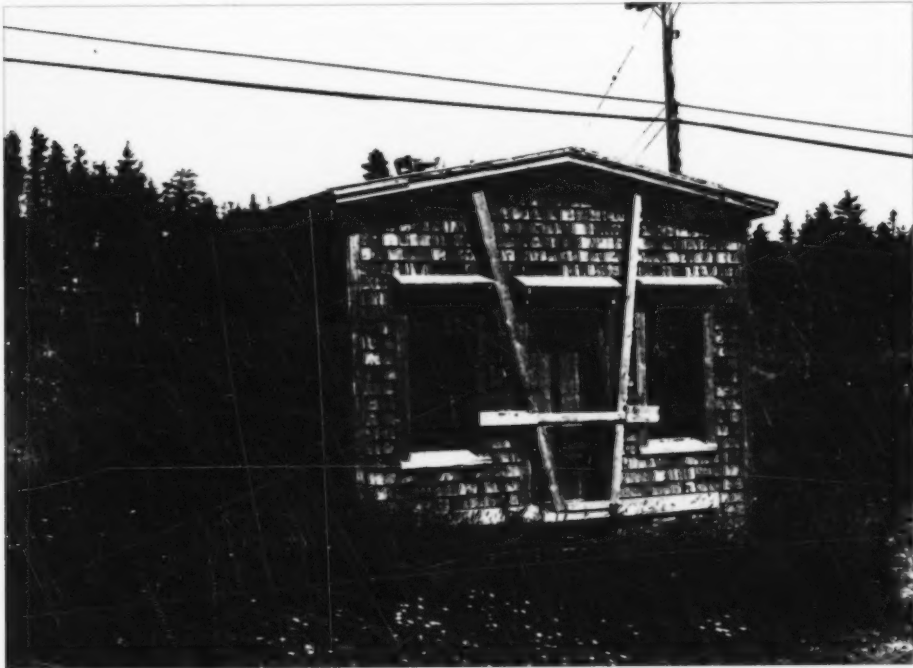


Figure 98. Former confectionary store and blacksmith shop.

the 1950s (Figure 99). Likewise, the Downey farm possessed a threshing machine that traveled around to the various Codroy Valley communities during harvest time (Figure 100). It was also one of the first farms in the valley to adopt some of the tractor-driven machines such as balers, tedders, mowers and rakers (Figure 101).

The development of the Downey farm follows the pattern typical in much of the Codroy Valley. The earliest farmers of the valley, like the Downeys, located their buildings near the river — the main Codroy Valley roadway in winter and summer. With the establishment of roads between various Codroy Valley settlements at the end of the nineteenth century, new buildings were located close to the road, rather than on the banks of the river. Largely, the local farmers developed these connecting links themselves. They regularly asked the St. John's government for financial assistance for their improvement. Some saw improved roads as a way to increase their ability to market Codroy Valley produce. Throughout the 1880s, a number of petitions for the improvement of valley roads and river crossings were presented to the government in St. John's on behalf of Codroy Valley residents, and by 1884 even outsiders such as James P. Howley were arguing for improved roads in the region.³¹

Alterations of the farm buildings occurred on the Downey farm, just as on other Codroy Valley farms. Additions and deletions to buildings, the moving of buildings, and the construction of new buildings as new needs arose, were common to both the Downey farm and to other Codroy Valley operations. The two periods when renovations occurred were times of hopeful anticipation in this district. The



Figure 99. The Downey Tractor.



Figure 100. Downey tractor hauling a threshing machine.



Figure 101. Cutting hay on the Downey farm, 1960s.

arrival of the railroad and tourism at the end of the nineteenth century brought new ideas to the area and allowed farmers to demonstrate their positive attitude toward the future with alterations, movings and reordering of their environment. In the 1940s and 50s, likewise, Confederation with Canada brought similar hopes and dreams. On the Downey farm, this was the period when new tractor-driven machinery was introduced, and a number of modifications were made to the farm.³²

Between these two periods, a number of factors affected the Codroy Valley farm community. A potato blight in the late 1920s and 30s, the depression of the 1930s and the Second World War all helped to drive Codroy Valley young people to leave the region for occupations in other places.³³ Attempts were made to establish Co-operatives, to help improve the quality of life in the valley, but, while successful in Cape Breton Island and eastern Nova Scotia, these associations were largely unsuccessful in the Codroy Valley.³⁴ Co-operative farmers' associations, Co-operative Stores and Credit Unions were established, but did not last long.³⁵ Today, one credit union and one Co-operative store exist in the region.

Confederation with Canada in 1949 did not bring the expected economic boost to Codroy Valley farming. Instead, farmers of the region faced keen competition from other regions such as Prince Edward Island and found it increasingly difficult, by the 1950s and 60s, to maintain family farms. The 1960s brought electricity and by 1965, the Trans-Canada highway. However, many farms were no longer worked by this time. Instead, a number had been sub-divided into lots to be sold to non-Codroy Valley residents for summer tourist cabins. By the mid-1980s, there were only a dozen or more serious farmers in the valley: many found it necessary to purchase some of the smaller adjoining farms to increase their productivity.

Today, farming is not one of the major occupational choices for Codroy Valley residents. Fintan Downey's farm is now almost a hobby, with Fintan and his sister planting a garden and keeping a few hens and sheep for their own use. There are no horses or cattle, and much of their hay is mowed and used by other Codroy Valley farmers. The threshing machine and the Farm All tractor sit unused in the cavernous bank barn, along with other vestigial farm implements such as flails, adzes, hewing axes and harnesses.

Although some Codroy Valley farmers keep a few sheep and cattle, cut lumber in winter and operate small farms, many choose to work in the towns of Port aux Basques, twenty miles away, or even Stephenville, a one and one-half hour automobile drive from the Codroy Valley. Many of the valley's young people live in the cities and towns across Canada wherever steady employment is found. According to Brendan Doyle, the high school principal, seventy-five percent of the region's children leave after graduation from school.³⁶ For many, an education at a mainland university, or at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, is the road to success, not life on a Codroy Valley farm. Today, unemployment is one of the more serious problems faced by residents, and the Canadian federal government unemployment insurance benefits provide much of the cash income for many residents.

Just as it was at the turn of the twentieth century, the one business that has been nurtured and developed in recent years is tourism. Each year the foreign

license plates multiply, but so far the region has escaped much of the detrimental effects of tourist development. There are no blinking billboards, fast food chain outlets, or condominiums built on the beaches of the river. But there are increasing numbers of small summer cabins on what were once some of the valley's better farms. A letter to the editor of the local newspaper in 1982 complains about the increased number of these summer cabins, referring to them as, "chanties [sic] no larger than a regular washroom."³⁷

Fintan Downey and the remaining Codroy Valley farmers are facing change, just as their forefathers faced it when they chose to live in this land in the mid-nineteenth century. Their children are departing, some of their farms are being transformed into summer recreation areas or are being overgrown with uncut alders, and the Gaelic and Acadian languages, once so common, are now infrequently heard. But while there are many changes, there are also many aspects of Codroy Valley life, which remain the same. Next I will explore some of the complex elements of Codroy Valley personality to learn how local culture has affected the architecture of this region.

Notes

1. J.B. Jukes, *Excursions in and About Newfoundland During the Years 1839 and 1840* (London: John Murray, 1842), I, 172.
2. Murray map, 1860, Map Collection, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador.
3. W.E. Cormack, *Narrative of a Journey Across Newfoundland in 1822* (London: Longman, Green and Company, 1828), p. 105.
4. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1871, pp. 77-78.
5. Report of James S. Hayward, Landing Surveyor, St. John's, on a Visit to the Western Portions of Newfoundland, *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1866, p. 431.
6. Much of this description comes from Hayward, p. 431.
7. Hayward, p. 431.
8. Hayward, p. 431.
9. Hayward, p. 431.
10. Preliminary Report of Alexander Murray, Esquire, on his Geological Survey of 1867, *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1867, Appendix 855.
11. Murray, Appendix 855.
12. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1871, pp. 77-78.
13. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1874, p. 131.
14. *Newfoundlander*, 5 September 1876.
15. *Newfoundlander*, 25 April 1878.
16. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1878, p. 142, p. 83; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1879, p. 100; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1881, p. 111.
17. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1921.

18. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1884, Appendix, 508.
19. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1884, Appendix 453.
20. James P. Howley's Survey of Codroy Valley Lands, *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1884, Appendix 508.
21. Return of Crown Lands, *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1896, Appendix 184.
22. *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1896, Appendix 189.
23. *Journal of the House of Assembly, Sessional Papers*, 1887, p. 803.
24. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921.
25. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921, 1935.
26. Fintan Downey, the son of Alban, and present-day owner of the farm gave this diary to me. It is now deposited at MUNFLA with my fieldwork materials.
27. *Western Star*, 16 November 1921. Other Codroy Valley residents who operated schooners at this time included John Blanchard from Searston, Paul Hall from Millville, Dan MacLean from Searston, and Joe Bruce from the Gut. From Augustine O'Quinn, "The Fishing Settlement of Codroy Before 1900," St. John's: Maritime History Group Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland, n.d., pp. 10-12.
28. *Western Star*, 10 November 1920; *Western Star*, 1 September 1920; *Western Star*, 11 October 1922; *Western Star*, 1 March 1922.
29. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, Farm Machinery, 1945.
30. *Western Star*, 30 January 1953, p. 11.
31. *Public Ledger*, 18 March 18, 1877, p. 3; *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1884, Appendix 508.
32. Gerald Pocius found these same periods were times of rebuilding on the Southern Shore of Newfoundland. Gerald L. Pocius, "Raised Roofs and High Hopes: Rebuildings on Newfoundland's Southern Shore," *Material Culture*, 19 (1987), 67-83.
33. See for example, *Western Star*, 11 November 1931.
34. For a discussion of Co-operatives in the Codroy Valley see: John Szwed, *Private Cultures and Public Imagery: Interpersonal Relations in a Newfoundland Peasant Society*, Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies No. 2 (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1966), pp. 124-49.
35. When conducting fieldwork in the region in 1982 and 83, I discovered upon an empty Co-operative store from this period in the community of South Branch, complete with cardboard boxes of ledgers and documents. These are now housed in the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland.
36. Interview with Brendan Doyle.
37. *Gulf News*, 4 August 1982, p. 5.

CHAPTER 8

People and Buildings: The Influence of Cultural Activities on the Built Form



Many vernacular architecture studies show how economics, climate, and environment influence the architecture of a region, but few have focused attention on the influence of culture on the built form.¹ Some North American vernacular architecture studies search diligently for ethnic characteristics in architecture, mining Old World antecedent source areas for any possible features indicating cultural transfer to the New World. In this process, cultural factors such as spatial usage, siting of buildings, and the choice of building materials, have been analyzed, but seldom are the cultural activities within buildings used as a starting point.² Rapaport points out that many vernacular architecture studies end with the classification, listing and description of house types. He adds: "Little attempt has been made to link these forms to life patterns, beliefs and desires, although form is difficult to understand outside the context of its setting, culture and the way of life it shelters."³ I want to explore how aspects of Codroy Valley culture influence the built form. Much of my knowledge comes from fieldwork interviews and observations along with some documentary material, historical newspaper accounts of the region, and published and unpublished material collected by students and folklorists who have conducted research on the culture of this region.

Throughout the nineteenth century, a number of architectural forms were common in the Codroy Valley. Some, such as the hall-parlour type, followed a pattern common to the areas of Cape Breton Island from where Codroy Valley emigrants migrated. Others, such as the gothic peaked houses of the late nineteenth century, show that Codroy Valley builders were, at this period, keenly aware of international fashion. While a variety of architectural forms exist, there are a number of local cultural influences observable in the buildings of the region. One common pattern throughout the valley is the large kitchens. In all the house forms documented, including the small bungalows as well as the large two storey houses, kitchens often occupy the largest amount of space. This is not only evident in nineteenth century buildings, but also in the many twentieth century homes. In Mary Ona McIsaac's two-thirds Georgian house in St. Andrews, built in 1882, the kitchen occupies almost two-thirds of the floor space (Figure 102). Likewise, in Archie Francis McIsaac's bungalow, built in 1932, the kitchen is the largest room of the house (See Figures 62 and 63).

Besides functioning as the central room within houses, this was the space where important community events such as milling frolics occurred. As Bennett Knight has pointed out, in the early years of settlement the valley's different ethnic groups conducted separate milling frolics, but by the end of the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth century, "the milling frolics brought Scots, French, Irish

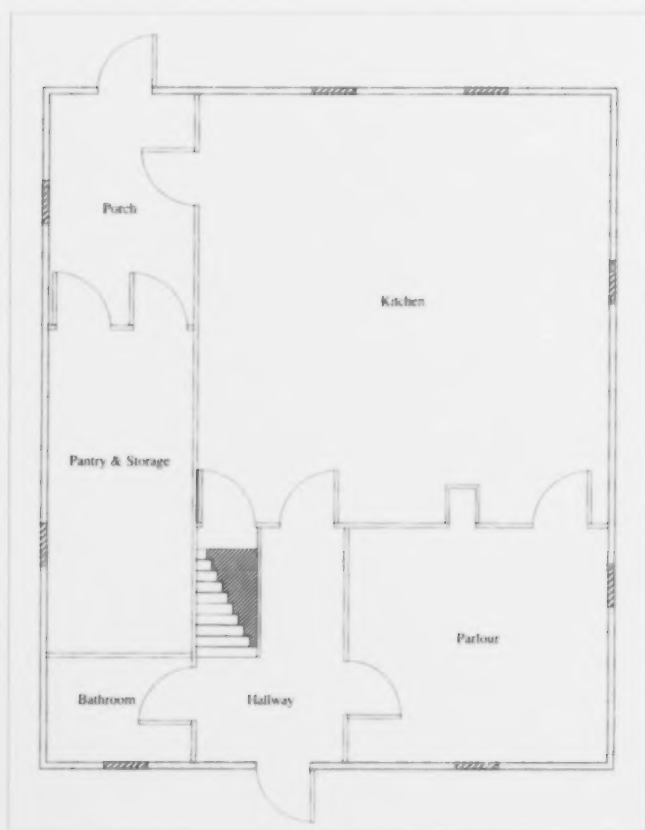


Figure 102.
Floorplan of Mary Ona MacIsaac's house.

and English together...."⁴ Each spring, Codroy Valley families sheared their sheep, and spun their wool. In spring and summer the activities on the Codroy Valley farm included planting, weeding, making hay, and harvesting. Not until autumn and winter, when farm work slowed down, and the butchering of animals was completed (Figure 103), were people able to hold milling frolics.

A large group — from twenty to fifty — gathered at one particular house to mill or, as it is referred to in the Scottish Highlands, to "full," "waulk" or "work" the cloth (Figure 104).⁵ According to Margaret Bennett Knight, the milling of the cloth in the Scottish highlands was generally the work of women. In the Codroy Valley, and in Cape Breton Island, both men and women did this work.⁶ Margaret Bennett Knight provides a description of the process:

Preparation for the milling consisted of setting up a long table, usually made out of four or five planks of wood, 6 to 8 inches wide and about 15 feet long. These were laid side by side on top of two or three wood trestles. Sometimes a couple of old doors placed end to end, or two 14 inch wide planks would serve the same



Figure 103. Butchering on John MacNeil's farm, Loch Lomond.

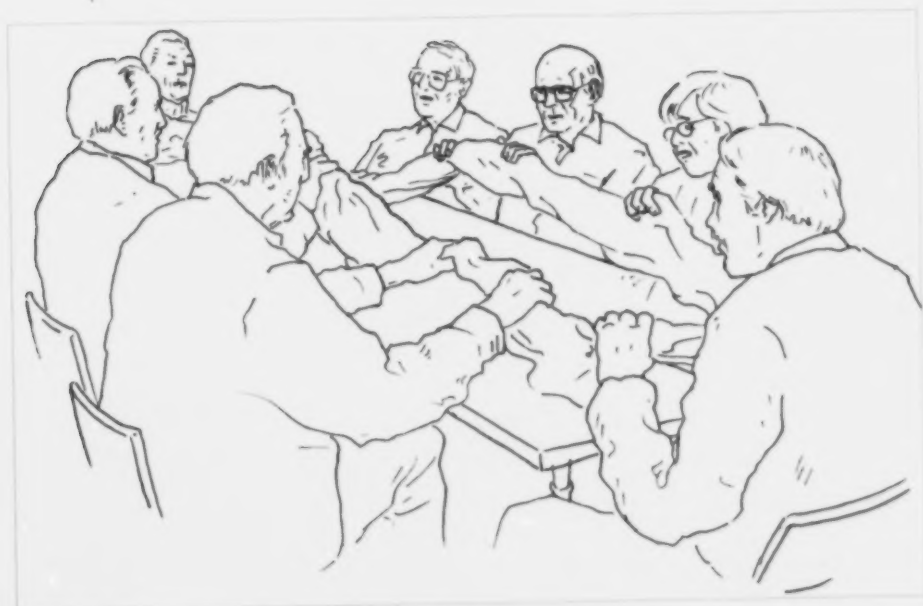


Figure 104. Sketch of milling frolic, Cudroy Valley.

purpose....Benches or chairs were set on either side of the table to accommodate up to twenty people; one seat was placed at each end for the two people (usually men) who would make sure the cloth passed around the table....The two ends of the 30 yard roll of cloth were sewn together. The cloth was submerged in a big tub of soapy water placed at one end of the table and was then lifted out. The excess was squeezed from it, and the cloth was placed on the table in a large loop....⁷

People sat at the table, with the better singers sitting at the end positions. The milling commenced with the beating of the cloth on the table, accompanied by Gaelic, English and Acadian songs. The cloth was passed around the table, from hand to hand, thickening as it was beaten. The women were the acknowledged experts on how thick and wide the cloth had to be.⁸ After the milling was completed, the cloth was smoothed out on the table and rolled, accompanied by what are referred to as "rolling" songs. Bennett Knight says, "These were also accompanied by laughter and lightheartedness, reflecting not only the theme of the songs but the pleasure of finishing the work and the anticipation of the night of merrymaking that would follow."⁹ The cloth and table would be removed after the work was finished and a party or "kitchen racket" would continue well into the evening with much food and drink offered by the host, with plenty of singing, playing music and dancing. Lucy Cormier, a well-known Acadian singer who participated in many millings states:

Perhaps the milling would be done by 11 or 12 o'clock. You'd have a cup of tea, then dance the rest of the night. All hardwood floor in your kitchen or living room. No such thing as canvas or carpet in our day. They used to have a good time; play the fiddle, the accordion....¹⁰

In addition to performing a needed function for the making of blankets and clothes, this was an important social event, bringing together young men and women for courting, neighbours and family for gossip and discussion, and fellow farmers for drinks and conviviality. It was even a time for pranks:

My mother tells about a milling she attended shortly after she married and moved to the valley thirty-four years ago. A touch of levity was added when a practical joker who had done little all day but stick pins in the busy workers was, himself, sat in the tub of water used for soaking the cloth.¹¹

The songs sung at these gatherings were extremely important in the region's folklore, addressing age-old themes of love, courtship, departure and love of homeland. Moreover, there is a strong satiric song tradition in the valley and, at a milling frolic, local composers might provide satiric commentary on the actions and behaviour of individuals from the community.¹² Bennett Knight points out that Acadian, Gaelic and English songs were regularly sung along with "macaronic" songs, or those that were amalgams of different languages.¹³

The tradition of milling frolics was no longer practiced by the 1950s, around the time of Confederation with Canada, and the period when many residents began leaving for other parts of Newfoundland, Canada and the United States. Moreover, this was the period when there was a decline in sheep raising because residents had easier access to commercial cloth. Milling frolics were revived for a short time in the late 1960s when Margaret Bennett Knight, a folklore graduate student from Scotland, attending Memorial University of Newfoundland, began collecting aspects of the Scottish Gaelic traditions in the valley. After collecting narratives and descriptions of milling frolics from many residents, she decided to hold an actual milling frolic. On one level it was a major success; she was able to bring together a large group of people to sing the older songs no longer sung in most families. Although many residents were enthusiastic about this occasion, after Bennett Knight left the region, the enthusiasm abated and the milling frolic tradition did not continue. Her recordings of these songs are invaluable, as they are, in some cases, the only records we have of the performance of these older Gaelic and Acadian songs from this district.

Millings were not the only frolics in the Valley, as there were frolics for various kinds of work. Shearing sheep, spinning wool, gathering wood, and threshing grain were activities commonly organized as frolics. Sheep shearing began whenever the weather became warm — usually in late May or early June. If a family kept only enough sheep for their own use, the males of the family usually did this work. If a family were selling the meat or yarn, then hired help and neighbours would begin this activity. Two men would tie a sheep's front and back legs and place the sheep on a short, flat table. One man tried to restrain the struggling animal while the other began to clip with the sheep shears, taking great care not to cut the animal. One researcher states:

Not anyone could shear the sheep, that is, one probably watched his father or brothers and then shown [sic] the process before they were allowed to participate in the task. The children usually gathered together to watch the process so they had lots of opportunities to learn.¹⁴

While it was the male's task to shear sheep, it was the duty of women and young girls to wash the wool. They, along with their female neighbours, took the sheared wool to a brook and, with the hope of fine weather for three or four days began the washing process. A boiler made from a cut-off drum was filled with water from the brook, soap was added, a fire built, and the wool was boiled in the drum, at as hot a temperature as the workers could stand. After washing, the wool was placed in a smaller tub before wrenching or squeezing out the excess water. The wool was then spread on the grass to dry. This would take at least two days. If windy weather prevailed, boards were placed over the wool to prevent it from blowing around the field. Much of this activity occurred in the field. The process would then move inside to the kitchen for "picking" or "pulling" the wool, to clean it of all the sticks and particles of hay. Following the cleaning, carding of wool began, using hand

cards obtained from factories in Canada or the United States. This again was a female activity occurring within the confines of a house's kitchen.

While shearing occurred outside the dwelling house and was mainly done by men, spinning wool was an interior activity, primarily done by women. Rather than an individual's work, this became a communal gathering for women:

Usually all the women in the community would take turns coming to each other's houses in order to spin the wool. They would stay at one house until they got all the wool spun and then move on to another house.¹⁵

These gatherings were usually held in kitchens and were accompanied by much food, conversation, gossip and, when the spinning was over, by activities such as card games:

The women would gather at a home to spin for a neighbour. They came early and worked until late at night. Some spun the yarn (the husbands having brought the spinning wheels that morning), others doubled and twisted it on a big wheel, while yet others hanked the yarn on homemade hanking reels.... The women baked for days in advance of a spinning party and, besides the main meals, served a lunch at night to the women and to the husbands who would come in the evenings for a card game.¹⁶

The kitchen is where neighbours visited and family and friends worked, whether milling, cleaning wool, spinning, card playing, or just talking. The kitchen space was the most important intermediary space between family and community.

Many of the kitchen activities described here no longer occur. These communal kitchen gatherings, in fact, were no longer necessary in the early years of the twentieth century, for at this time water-powered carding mills began to appear in the valley. The Gale family owned one carding mill, still standing in Millville in the 1980s. It began operating by 1900 and continued until the late 1940s (See Figure 51). Even though the Codroy Valley possessed the technology to eliminate these kitchen gatherings, residents felt the need to continue this traditional pattern of neighbourliness. A gradual erosion seems to have occurred with fewer and fewer gatherings of this kind being organized as the century developed. It was not until the 1950s and 60s that this work tradition in neighbours' kitchens almost ceased. This may well be a result of major transitions at the time such as: outmigration, a departure from the family farm, decline in sheep raising and the decline in use of both Gaelic and Acadian French. As well, the development of a tourism industry with outsiders buying land and building summer cottages in the region occurred as the century progressed.

Not only work traditions occurred within houses. Traditional activities surrounding weddings and wakes also took place within the confines of the Codroy Valley house. Whole clusters of traditional behaviour and performances surrounding eating, dancing, drinking and playing music occurred at a Codroy Valley wedding. The priest performed the wedding ceremony at local churches, but the celebrations

afterward occurred at the family homes of the bride or groom. A newspaper account in 1923 describes the wedding of Allan McArthur, the main character in Margaret Bennet's research, and a well-known Gaelic seanachaidh [recorder, oral historian, storyteller]:

St. Andrews, Little River — May 23 — Allan McArthur, Little River, married Mary Cecilia McDonald.... After mass the bridal party drove to the home of the bride accompanied by a band of pipers and invited guests, where dinner was served and an enjoyable afternoon was spent with music and dancing. In the evening the party proceeded to the home in appropriately decorated vehicles. The drive was so enlivened by the strain of bagpipe music.... Supper was served immediately and dancing was again resumed until the 'wee sma hours' [i.e. wee small hours] of morning.¹⁷

Eating, music and dancing all played a major role at this wedding. A cultural transfer from Cape Breton Island Scottish culture — bagpipe music — played an important ceremonial role in this event. The many photographs of bagpipe musicians in Codroy Valley family photograph albums do not show a musician dressed in the stereotypical tartan kilt and sporran. Rather, they show young and old men dressed in their best suit of clothing, ready to perform for the wedding of a neighbour or friend (Figures 105 and 106).¹⁸



Figure 105. Johnny Archie MacDonald playing the bagpipes, St. Andrews, Codroy Valley.



Figure 106.
Sears MacArthur playing the
bagpipes at the Codroy Valley
Folk Festival, Upper Ferry, 1982.

Another account from 1909 provides a description of a Tompkins/MacDonald wedding:

After the ceremony the newly made bride and groom, with numerous guests, repaired to the bride's former home, where a sumptuous dinner had been prepared. But the festivity was only to begin at 'Afton' [the resort hotel owned by the groom]. At 4 pm arrived the bridal party, and by 5 o'clock no less than 50 sleighs stood before the door. Two hundred guests were to be entertained and there was food and entertainment for all and of the best. Dancing was the greatest attraction of the evening (next to the bride of course).... The rooms were many and spacious and the music of the kind our Scottish youths love best—the bagpipes. There were several present, chief among the performers being, of course, Mr. Andrew D. McIsaac. Several violins and other music had to be requisitioned to supply the main sets continually on the floor. At 8.30 on Wednesday morning the guests slowly and reluctantly began to withdraw, the night having been all too short.¹⁹

Playing fiddles, bagpipe music and dancing were an extremely important part of a traditional Codroy Valley wedding. Other accounts report storytelling, step dancing, and Gaelic singing at weddings during this period.²⁰ At present, most Codroy Valley wedding parties are set at local halls or at one of the local clubs or lounges such as the Lion's Club in Searston or the Chignic Lodge in South Branch but important segments of the event still happen within Codroy Valley homes. Some families continue to sponsor parties for close friends and relatives before and after weddings

at the home of the bride or groom. Nevertheless, the construction of schools and community halls began early in the twentieth century. By the 1920s, there were four schools and three halls in the district. While some dances and parties after weddings were held at the halls, many of the non-church events surrounding weddings continued to be held in the houses of the district throughout the twentieth century.

Wakes were also held in Codroy Valley houses. Friends of a family went to the house where someone had died, offering condolences and bringing food, then helping to prepare the body for a wake and a funeral. Some men were asked to dig the grave, and others to build a coffin. The wake began in the evening:

People come from miles around to pay their last respects to the dead and to extend sympathy to the bereaved. The house is usually full of people — the remains resting in the front room. Out in the kitchen people are meeting those they have not seen for a while and their conversation flows on. In the front room, near the casket, sit most of the members of the family....²¹

While the body was laid out in a coffin in the front room or the parlour, friends, neighbours and the grieving family ate and conversed in the kitchen. Beer or home-brew was consumed outside the house, as drinking was not approved within houses during wakes. The priest led the mourners in prayer and in saying the rosary. While most mourners left for home by midnight, three or four men or women stayed the whole night, playing cards, and checking to make sure the candles surrounding the coffin in the front room stayed lit. While playing cards, the participants told stories about the deceased and reminisced about personal associations with the deceased.²² Today most wakes are not held in people's homes but, following a common North American pattern, are held at commercially run funeral parlours. Nevertheless, segments of the older pattern remain with neighbours and relatives visiting the family of the deceased at their home, bringing food and offering their condolences.

While some of these kitchen activities such as milling frolics are no longer practiced in the 1980s, other daily activities still occur here. The kitchen is still the place in the region's homes where food is prepared and eaten. Small pantries attached to a kitchen were common and the kitchen's basic furnishings consisted of cupboards, a table, chairs or a bench, a rocking chair and a daybed. In the 1980s many modern bungalows delete the dining room called for in the original plan to allow a larger kitchen to be constructed. Likewise, activities such as card games are still regularly held in kitchens; I spent many evenings talking to Neil McIsaac in his kitchen while we played card games such as "Hearts" and "forty-fives," common games of the region. These games are more commonly played in the fall and during long winter nights, but if the occasion arises, they are also played in the summer. In winter Neil McIsaac travels to the home of his friends, Archie Francis and Lizzie McIsaac, in St. Andrews, for an entire evening of playing cards. Accompanying this game is much conversation along with a lunch of sandwiches, sweets and tea. This kind of visiting tradition to play cards and converse in kitchens is still a common activity in the region in the 1980s.

While weddings and wakes were important communal events within kitchens and parlours, important co-operative work often took place in the fields and woods surrounding Codroy Valley dwellings. "Hauling," "chopping" and "ploughing" frolics were organized for the church, for individuals unable to procure their own wood, or for people having difficulty ploughing their own land. A newspaper account described a hauling frolic to gather hay and wood for one family:

*Isaac Lomond's house was the scene of one of the old time hauling frolics on Tuesday. About twenty horses from Codroy and Grand River took part in hauling hay and wood. Everything loose in sight was picked up and carried along. In the evening all the old folk assembled at Mr. Lomond's home where they enjoyed the light fantastic till quite late at night.*²³

An event such as this was an occasion for alcohol consumption and a party of some kind when the work was completed. Food, drinking, dancing and music were all a part of this co-operative custom. While the wood hauling occurred outside the house, these other activities took place inside Codroy Valley houses and most often in kitchens. It is interesting to note that in 1926, the custom of a hauling frolic was considered to be "old time" and thereby newsworthy enough to be commented upon in the newspaper. Moreover, only the "old folk" assembled at the house for a dance and party after the frolic. This suggests that the tradition was no longer as common as it once was, and the younger people, it seems, were not a part of this gathering. They may have viewed this as an "old" tradition, one that their parents and grandparents engaged in, but a tradition not for them. By the 1980s, when I was conducting my fieldwork, a frolic of this kind was no longer a part of Codroy Valley culture.

While the community itself organized and engaged in some co-operative enterprises, the churches in the various Codroy Valley communities supported and sponsored outdoor co-operative gatherings, ranging from frolics to obtain materials for constructing churches, to visits from special clergy members. When churches were built, local men helped cut wood while well-known carpenters helped to construct the buildings. Card games, garden parties, play productions and dances were held to raise money to construct churches.²⁴ A description of a visit by the Archbishop in 1917 shows the way in which the community co-operated in a church-sponsored event:

*Archbishop Roche and party arrived at St. Andrews by Friday's express. They were given a great reception by Monsignor Sears and parishioners on arrival. They drove to Searston accompanied by two of our best Scotch pipers, playing the bagpipes and the longest procession of horses and carriages ever seen in Searston Road...*²⁵

Bagpipe music and a parade accompanied this important community event.

More important, however, is a note appearing in the newspaper two months later:

*The Catholic people of Codroy Valley... thank George Collier of Codroy, who so kindly loaned his double seated carriage to convey his Grace Archbishop Roche and party from Searston to Upper Ferry here....*²⁶

This shows that this form of co-operation crossed religious boundaries, for George Collier was not a Roman Catholic, but a Protestant from the nearby fishing community of Codroy. Five years later, in 1922, bagpipe players and little girls dropping garlands and flowers accompanied Bishop Renouf's visit to the Codroy Valley. As with the Archbishop's visit in 1917, a Protestant, Mr. Patry, the lighthouse keeper at Cape Anguille, offered his new automobile, one of the first in the valley, to drive the Bishop wherever required.²⁷ Church sponsored events such as a visit by a Bishop or Archbishop, the blessing of a new Church bell, the dedication of a new church or even an annual garden party, included a gathering at the end of the day in a church hall for a dance and celebratory party. The schools and church halls appeared in the valley within the first ten years of the twentieth century, after the construction of better roads connecting Codroy Valley communities. Events to raise money for churches and schools were regularly held in these buildings. Card games, teas, dances, plays, and even balls were held in these facilities. A 1915 report states:

*Before the penitential season overtakes them, the ladies of Searston held their annual ball in St. Anne's hall on Monday night, 8th inst. The programme of the evening was opened by the playing of the bagpipes, after which followed the usual dance programme.... Music was furnished by local talent, violin, organ and bagpipes, which sent a spirit of cheerfulness through the whole crowd, and made even the oldest feel like dancing and enjoying themselves..... The proceeds of the evening will go towards repairing the parish church.*²⁸

While events such as these began to be held outside family dwellings in community buildings, a complete change in usage did not occur, for kitchens were still community gathering places. Newly constructed houses in the early years of the twentieth century were generally smaller than those constructed throughout the previous century. Instead of building one and one-half storey dwellings and two storey structures, Codroy Valley residents began to use one-storey structures based on the ubiquitous bungalow type. But even within these bungalows, the kitchen was an extremely large room, often the largest room of the house. In a sense, Codroy Valley residents were experimenting with outside ideas — taking the bungalow type as a common building form, building community halls, and attending plays in those halls — but were also retaining some of their own traditional culture.

When a dance was held in a hall, for example, bagpipe and fiddle music, the kind heard in Codroy Valley kitchens, was often the accompanying music. Today you are still able to hear the older fiddle tunes, locally composed songs and, to a lesser extent, bagpipe music in community halls and at outdoor festivals. In 1982, the first Codroy Valley "Folks" festival was organized and sponsored by members of the local valley Lion's Club. Held at the sports field beside the high school, the

festival brought together local country bands, older French Acadian singers, Scottish Gaelic singers, a young rock band, step dancers, square dancers, a bagpipe player and a number of fiddlers. The festival offered Codroy Valley citizens and tourists a sense of the variety of local entertainment available in this region. Financially it was very successful, prompting the organizing group to hold an annual festival every summer since 1982. What is interesting about the Codroy Valley folk festivals is the diversity of creative expression found in the performers and, more important, the co-existence of the older form of expression with the new. These newer ideas did not usurp all of the older expressive culture, but complemented the existing traditions.

While co-operation seems to have been an important part of Codroy Valley culture, egalitarianism did not mean that competitiveness or non-co-operation did not exist. John Szwed, an anthropologist who examined interpersonal relations in the Codroy Valley, argues that in the early days of settlement, co-operative work was carried on, but always in the context of social activities.²⁹ After tracing the failure of institutional co-operative enterprises in the region, he concludes that consensus and co-operation are not great concerns in the Codroy Valley: "Rather, it is the avoidance of dissension that is important."³⁰ He sees this avoidance of conflict that pervades the "public culture" of the Codroy Valley as a way to ensure equality and reciprocity in interpersonal relationships. Non-co-operation was allowed and indeed encouraged within the confines of regulated events at special times of years. Calendar customs such as Halloween, mummering, and the annual Codroy Valley winter horse race are times when competitiveness, hostility and unsanctioned activity were engaged in within the region. At the turn of the twentieth century, every February, March or April, when ice covers the Grand and Little Codroy Rivers, a horse race bringing Codroy Valley men and women together was held (Figure 107). It was a regular

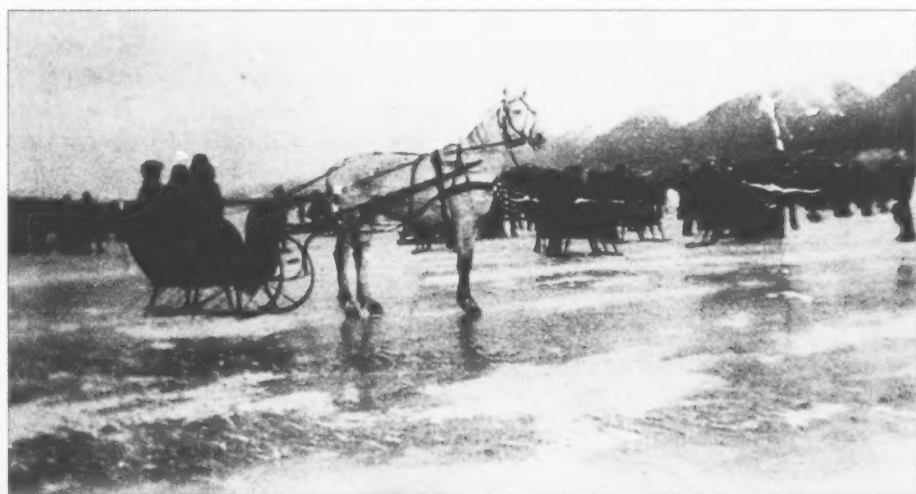


Figure 107. *Horse Race on the Grand Codroy River, 1940s.*

occurrence until the start of World War Two but does not seem to have been revived after the war. Men brought their fastest horse, bets were made, and a course was laid on the ice. At times more than four hundred local residents came to watch the event. A local poet wrote about this occasion:

*'Twas April the 1st, a fine clear day,
The valley turned out in sport array,
To witness a feat which all agree,
In horse race contest, all others flee.
In last year's race, all readers may know,
That Mollie Bell her tail did show,
To every horse that entered the race,
And one round year she held first place.
Her owner, John Doyle, again this year,
Must needs try hard to win the cheer.
As 'Uncle Thomas' with Darkie G,
Beheld the prize with wholesome glee,
So only the names above were heard,
'If other should come it must be thirds,'
This the opinion and general remark,
when 'Horseman Jack' came in with Lark.
The people have thronged to Great Codroy,
Their faces are marked with anxious joy.
While up the ice each jockey went,
To be in first was fully bent.
'They're coming down ' is echoed round,
And not could 'vert that gaze profound,
When 'Horseman Jack' with beauty Lark,
Outstrips opponents enough to mark.
In six full heats the match is close,
The winner oft gains by length of nose.
And each has yet a chance to win,
For all are ties who entered in,
The 7th heat must tell the tale,
Of who shall win, or who shall fail,
'Twas only he who saw that part,
Can tell the capacity of the heart,
The race is over for this year,
the hills re-echo the deafening cheer,
Applauding the winners in the hard day's toil,
The veteran sport, Mr. Jack G. Doyle.³¹*

The annual horse race was a day when farmers competed with their fellow farmers, displaying the strength and speed of their own horses. Many residents today fondly

reminisce about these races and point out that the farmers took these events very seriously, betting money, and regularly grooming a particular horse for this annual occasion.

Halloween was yet another time when families were allowed to engage in pranks which at other times of year were frowned upon. Teenagers and young adults were allowed to steal chickens, sheep and vegetables from other farms; this food was used in the 'scoff' or meal that night in the kitchen to which neighbours and friends were invited. It was even more pleasurable when the meal was shared with the person who was robbed. Outhouses were overturned, fences, gates, even horses were stolen, and various pranks were played on individuals. Fourach, a traditional Halloween food of cream and raw oatmeal, and maragan, or blood pudding [sometimes called black pudding], were eaten at the tables of Scottish families. Coins, buttons, rings and other smaller articles were placed in the fourach, used by Codroy Valley children as a way to predict the future. If a button was found in the fourach, it meant the holder would forever be a bachelor; a coin, the person would become wealthy; and a ring, the holder would have a happy marriage. The various schools organized apple bobbing, ring games, and the cutting and making of Halloween figures such as black cats, and witches on broomsticks from construction paper for the children. While the schools played a role in the daytime activities of this custom, it was within Codroy Valley homes, outbuildings and yards where many of the pranks happened.

Likewise, the traditional custom of mummering during the twelve days of Christmas allowed residents to behave in ways not normally sanctioned by the community. In the Codroy Valley, as in other areas of Newfoundland, this activity is largely a visiting custom without the elaborate mummering plays described in other regions and cultures.³² The practice of mummering exists mainly amongst settlers of Irish and English extraction in Newfoundland. There do not seem to be reports of this activity amongst Highland Scottish communities, nor have reports of this custom been found in Cape Breton Island Scottish communities. Nevertheless, there are some parallels to this tradition in the behaviour and activities of the lowland Scottish Hogmanay guisers who travel from house to house in disguise on December 31 singing, dancing and at times, guessing identities.³³ In Cape Breton Island, however, amongst Acadian communities, a custom similar to mummering — the *Mi Careme* or mid-Lenten celebration — is still practised. In the Codroy Valley, mummering may well have originated with the minority English and Irish settlers or, perhaps, with the Acadian settlers. This tradition may be an example of cultural borrowing by the Scots from other ethnic groups in the region.

The Codroy Valley mummering tradition is one reason why there is a cultural preference for large kitchens in this region. The kitchen, the most public room of the house, is the main setting for mummering. It is here where the host accepts the night visitors who are dressed in old clothes, table cloths, hip boots, woolen underwear, old hats or virtually any material available to disguise one's identity.³⁴ Margaret Bennett describes the clothing worn by a group of three mummers who visited neighbors from Upper Ferry to Searston along the Grand Codroy River, to St. Andrews, and then back to Upper Ferry through Loch Lomond:

They dressed that evening in 'homemade rigs of brin bags [hemp sacks]' and hardly a soul recognized them. Although mummers would sometimes make 'rigs' such as Margaret described, they almost always dressed in whatever was available in the way of old or eccentric clothing — old, worn pants [trousers], long underwear, old fashioned or torn dresses, strange footwear, such as long rubber hip-waders, old hats, or whatever else they could find. Much of the fun in mummering was in getting dressed up and laughing at the unlikely costumes of the others in the party, as some men dressed as women and vice versa.³⁵

A small group of two to six mummers travel from house to house entering the houses of their neighbours and accepting food and drink. Margaret Bennett provides a clear description of important aspects of this tradition when she asked an informant to comment on anthropologist John Szwed's discussion of Codroy Valley mummering:

It was true, she said, that they were not invited, as the surprise was part of the fun, but they always knocked loudly on the door before walking in. Usually they did not wait for someone to answer the door, but the loud knocks gave a moment's warning that the mummers were at their house. Yes, they stamped their feet, Margaret said, and when she read Szwed's description of the 'mummers walk' she laughed heartily and said that was just what they did.... She also agreed that they went out of the kitchen, usually into the sitting room [parlour] if they thought someone was missing out on their visit, and there were times when they'd 'have a bit of fun' and nudge someone, but she did not equate this behavior with aggression as Szwed did. She said that it was only playful and that no one minded, especially as they all had 'real fun when the mummers danced with each other or with the people in the house.'... When she came to the section where Szwed referred to mummers playing musical instruments, Margaret said that this was true, but generally they would only play the mouth organ which they could do underneath their masks.... She also added to the description by saying that whenever they spoke they would use 'mummers talk,' a high-pitched tone, while inhaling, in very rapid speech.³⁶

Disguising identity is an important aspect of this tradition with males and females dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex, and disguising their voices or any other distinguishable physical features. Part of the tradition also requires the host to guess the visitors' identity. In some cases, the mummers are identified, in others; the guests are not identified. The mummers have a great chuckle amongst themselves if they are not identified.³⁷ Food or drink is given to the mummers once they unmask. Szwed interprets the ritual as a time when individuals are allowed to be aggressive to the host; however, this is refuted by one of Margaret Bennett's informant who "was most surprised that any mummers would go out mummering so that they could show aggression towards their host."³⁸ She pointed out that mummers visited houses where "they knew the people real well, or if someone you

were with knew them" and wondered how people would still co-operate and live together afterwards if aggressiveness was a part of this ritual.³⁹

Other activities, then, still occur in the kitchen, the public room of the Codroy Valley house (Figures 108 and 109). Card games such as crib and forty-fives are played in kitchens during the long winter nights with friends and neighbours. Likewise, the kitchen is the setting for many of the non-church activities of local weddings and the socializing aspect of wakes when friends gather with food to show their congratulations or condolences. In a sense, this use of the kitchen follows the older *ceilidh* [house visit] tradition, common in Cape Breton Island and in the Scottish



Figure 108.
A Codroy Valley
kitchen.



Figure 109.
Rose MacDonald
kitchen,
St. Andrews.

Highlands. When men drink with their friends or when songs are sung, it is usually in the kitchen. I was given a first-hand account of this when, in my first summer of fieldwork in the valley, I visited a local singer, Hughie O'Quinn, from the area known as the Block. Having been told that he had composed a number of satirical songs about life in the Codroy Valley, I set out with Codroy Valley friends, Neil McIsaac, Mike MacNeil, and Brendan McArthur and two university friends from St. John's and Delaware. We entered the singer's house through a front door leading directly into a large, open room — a kitchen — where he sat at the table. After drinking some beer and talking about the Codroy Valley, we finally asked him to sing for us. After much denial, he finally sang a number of locally composed ballads. What is interesting is that the building he lives in is a recent building, constructed in the 1970s which follows the pattern of some local bungalows. The floor plan of this one storey house is fairly minimal containing a bedroom, bathroom, small pantry and a large kitchen that takes up most of the space of the house. This use of the kitchen in this way follows a very old British Isles pattern of using the "open hall" for all daily activities. According to Ronald Brunskill, the open hall plan is the vernacular counterpart to the Saxon communal hall, a large room open to the roof timbers, containing the living quarters for a family.⁴⁰ As Brunskill says, "the open hall remained in use at a steadily decreasing social level until the nineteenth century, when the principal living-room of a quarryman's cottage might be open to its roof."⁴¹

One of the reasons for this usage of space is the large size of Codroy Valley families. It was not uncommon in the past to have families as large as ten or twelve. A survey of the 1921 nominal census reveals that in some houses either nephews, adopted children, parents, unmarried siblings, widowers or boarders were living with the head of a household and the other family members. A survey of fifty families from this 1921 census on the north side of the Grand Codroy River indicates a total population of 324 people in these fifty homes; this averages approximately 6.5 people per household. The number of people per household is actually larger than this sample indicates. The sample is skewed because of the large number of bachelors in the Codroy Valley who appear in the census as single member households.⁴²

Even in modern CMHC designed houses in the Codroy Valley there is a need for larger kitchens. Some families rearrange the original design to delete a dining room and allow a larger kitchen. Rather than having three large rooms — kitchen, dining room and living room — in addition to bedrooms, many new Codroy Valley houses have only a large kitchen and living room. The living room takes on the function of the older parlour. The parlour in many Codroy Valley houses is an area of display where the important objects of a family—the family photographs, the piano, the organ, and the inherited furniture — are preserved and displayed. In many cases, the parlour is the family museum where there is a record kept of the important rituals of a family — weddings, births, and deaths. It is the most formal room of the house where special visitors such as priests or ministers are entertained. This again is an older pattern, commonly found in areas of the

British Isles. Henry Glassie, for example, provides a description of how this room functions in Ballymenone, Ireland:

The Room is used ceremonially. When the family gathers to mark an event in its history, another Christmas or a wedding, the solemn furniture that stands in decorous idleness for months will work to serve rich meals. Christmas brings a fat goose. Then the certificates framed on the walls — the school prizes, military citations, and elevations of rank in fraternal orders — will remind everyone of past familial success....⁴³

At the present, in many Codroy Valley homes, the living room takes on the function of the older parlour where the many photographic records of a family's past are found and newer important items such as VCRs, televisions and chesterfields are located. The terms, "parlour" and "front room" are now no longer commonly being employed to designate this special room.

Local folk cultural activities do have an important impact on the architecture of the Codroy Valley. My survey of the cultural activities affecting house form only scratches the surface. Much more work is needed before we will obtain a better understanding of this complex issue. It can be concluded, however, that there was a locally perceived need for large kitchens from the time of initial settlement to the present. Large kitchens remained, even when new architectural ideas emerged in the district. The local folk cultural activities required this large room for sharing and communalism, which were important parts of these events. Szwed points out that reciprocity and the dyadic contract — the bestowing of a favour on another person to form an unwritten contract or obligation — was the way in which Codroy Valley people ensured equality and democracy in their communities. It is the favours and obligations, he argues, which bind the individuals together and leads to a cautiousness which underlies most community relationships.⁴⁴ This cautious approach may well be why some of the older patterns of architecture remained. Individuals were careful not to discard too many of the older ways, even with different, more modern, approaches continually encroaching upon the district. The various traditional activities occurring within and outside Codroy Valley homes encouraged the development of a distinct architectural personality in this region of Newfoundland. It was in these face-to-face interactions, calendar customs and rites of passage, within and outside houses, that the Codroy Valley developed its unique architectural personality.

Notes

1. For a study focusing on this issue see Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, Foundations of Cultural Geography Series (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969).
2. See for example: Edward A. Chappell, "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael

- Vlach (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. 27–57; John Michael Vlach "The Shotgun House: An African Cultural Legacy," in *Common Places*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, pp. 58–78; Michael Ann Williams, *Homeplace: The Social use and Meaning of the Folk Dwelling in Southwestern North Carolina* (Athens and London: The University of Georgian Press, 1991).
3. Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, p. 17.
 4. Margaret Bennett, "Some Aspects of the Scottish Gaelic Traditions of the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland," MA Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1975, p. 100.
 5. Margaret Bennett, "A Codroy Valley Milling Frolic," in *Folklore Studies in Honour of Herbert Halpert: A Festschrift*, ed. Kenneth S. Goldstein and Neil V. Rosenberg (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980), p. 99.
 6. Bennett, "A Codroy Valley," p. 99.
 7. Bennett, "A Codroy Valley," p. 101.
 8. Bennett, "A Codroy Valley," p. 101.
 9. Bennett, "A Codroy Valley," p. 107.
 10. MUNFLA 79–370, p. 18.
 11. MUNFLA 71–87, pp. 22–23.
 12. For a study of this satiric songmaking tradition see John F. Szwed, "Paul E. Hall: A Newfoundland Songmaker and Community of Song," in *Folksongs and their Makers*, ed. Edward D. Ives, Henry Glassie and John F. Szwed (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press), pp. 149–67.
 13. Margaret Bennett, "Scottish, Gaelic, English and French: Some Aspects of the Macaronic Tradition of the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland," *Regional Language Studies: Newfoundland*, 4, No. 1 (1972), 25–30.
 14. MUNFLA 79–700.
 15. MUNFLA, 79–700, p. 20.
 16. MUNFLA, 71–87, pp. 21–22.
 17. *Western Star*, 6 June 1923, p. 4.
 18. Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 15–42.
 19. *Western Star*, 27 January 1909, p. 5.
 20. *Western Star*, 21 May 1913; *Western Star*, 14 October 1914; *Western Star*, 17 November 1920; *Western Star*, 13 July 1932.
 21. MUNFLA 71–39, p. 9.
 22. MUNFLA 71–39, p. 10.
 23. *Western Star*, 10 February 1926; for other descriptions of frolics such as these see: *Western Star*, 9 November 1921; *Western Star*, 3 March 1926.
 24. See *Western Star*, 2 June 1915; *Western Star*, 29 October 1930; *Western Star*, 20 May 1931.
 25. *Western Star*, 1 June 1917.
 26. *Western Star*, 8 August 1917.

27. *Western Star*, 30 August 1922.
28. *Western Star*, 24 February 1915.
29. John F. Szwed, *Private Cultures and Public Imagery: Interpersonal Relations in a Newfoundland Peasant Society*, Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies No. 2, Institute of Social and Economic Research (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1966), p. 103.
30. Szwed, *Private Cultures*, p. 104.
31. *Western Star*, 12 April 1922, p. 3.
32. See, for example, the standard work on Newfoundland Mumming: Herbert Halpert and George M. Story, ed. *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland: Essays in Anthropology, Folklore and History* (Toronto: Published for Memorial University of Newfoundland by University of Toronto Press, 1969).
33. Herbert Halpert, "A Typology of Mumming," in *Christmas Mumming*, p. 39.
34. Much of this description of mumming or "mumming" in the Codroy Valley comes from: Margaret Bennett, *The Last Stronghold: Scottish Gaelic Traditions in Newfoundland*, Canada's Atlantic Folklore and Folklife Series, No. 13 (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1989), pp. 101-17. See also: John F. Szwed, "The Mask of Friendship: Mumming as a Ritual of Social Relations," in *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland*, pp. 104-118.
35. Bennett, *The Last Stronghold*, p. 110.
36. Bennett, *The Last Stronghold*, pp. 111-112.
37. Bennett, *The Last Stronghold*, p. 112.
38. Szwed, "The Mask of Friendship," p. 117; Bennett, *The Last Stronghold*, p. 113.
39. Bennett, *The Last Stronghold*, p. 113.
40. Ronald W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture*, 3rd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), pp. 114-15.
41. Brunskill, p. 114.
42. Newfoundland, Department of Colonial Secretary, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921.
43. Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History in an Ulster Community*, Publications of the American Folklore Society, Vol. 4 (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p. 342.
44. Szwed, "The Mask of Friendship," pp. 107-08.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion: The Nature of Vernacular Architecture



My experiences in the Codroy Valley have taught me much about the people and buildings of this district and have forced me to think more deeply about the nature of vernacular architecture. When Neil McIsaac and I visited Codroy Valley houses, we seldom knocked on doors and instead walked directly into the kitchens. In all cases, no doubt, the occupants knew about us long before we entered the room either because friends had told them about what we were doing, or because they had in fact seen us travelling the roads, visiting the district's older homes. When we visited Archie Francis McIsaac and his wife Lizzie at their bungalow in Tompkins, for example, our visit did not end when the recording of the house was complete. Rather, Lizzie prepared us a fine lunch in the hot kitchen, where we listened to Archie and Lizzie answer our questions about the once common milling frolics, about the preparing, carding and spinning of wool, and about how a house was built when a young man decided to get married. With Lizzie sitting in a rocking chair while knitting a sweater, and Archie seated at the head of the table with his arms folded on his chest, they graciously answered our questions, and when we finished, allowed us to photograph their family album. They told us about other homes that we should plan to visit in the valley and were sincerely interested in our project to record some of Codroy Valley's architecture. Only later that summer did Neil tell me that he still regularly visited Archie Francis and his wife in the winter for conversation and card playing.

It was my experiences visiting Codroy Valley homes which showed me that older patterns such as this use of kitchens as public rooms, is still a part of this district's building tradition. On a wider level, it speaks to the issue of stability in vernacular architecture. It tells us that some patterns of the Codroy Valley building tradition are remarkably stable, continuing in use for a long period, even going back to the pre-migration period in Cape Breton Island. Older patterns which continue to the present day include the use of root cellars (Figure 110), the construction of hay barracks, a visiting and card playing tradition, a pattern of alteration and modification, and the tradition of re-use. Some of the common construction methods and floor plan types of Cape Breton Island were also directly transferred across the Cabot Strait to the Codroy Valley. Settlers chose to construct their homes and outbuildings using similar plans to the ones used in their home district including: (1) the one cell plan, (2) derivative of the one cell plan, (3) the hall-parlour plan, and (4) a derivative of the hall-parlour plan. While stone construction was not found in the Codroy Valley, log and frame construction techniques similar to those used in Cape Breton, were common. This leads to an insight into the nature of vernacular architecture: that architectural patterns and techniques at the vernacular level are often repeated in a relatively fixed form for a long time. Vernacular patterns are



Figure 110. Root Cellar.

stable and tenacious, lasting much longer than many fads or fashions designed without the needs of the user in mind.

But this does not mean that vernacular architecture is uninfluenced by outside ideas or that change does not occur in this kind of architecture. We are sometimes given the notion that people of rural regions are geographically isolated and unaffected by outside ideas. As George Kubler says, "Human desires in every present instant are torn between the replica and the invention, between the desire to return to the known pattern, and the desire to escape it by a new variation."¹ While there was much permanence there were also many changes in Codroy Valley architecture with the passage of time. These changes arrived when international ideas and styles, different from the conventional ones of the district, began to arrive in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century. For example, Francis McIsaac chose to retain an older floor plan style while using the new form of the biscuit box exterior for his new house at the turn of twentieth century. Others chose to add selected features of international style such as Martin Devoe's choice of bay windows and Joe Pat Downey's front gothic peak, making a statement to their neighbours that they were modern in their thinking. Even though some of the new forms required more spatial division within houses, Codroy Valley builders continued to construct large kitchens and smaller parlours within the confines of these international forms. The new manner of building, however, did not hastily usurp the older form of construction. Just as linguists see regional dialect as local examples of standard language, we see here indigenous versions of international styles.

Economic changes in the region and an optimistic attitude toward future development of Codroy Valley resources were the catalysts for the entry of these new architectural ideas. So, vernacular architecture, while following conventions and older ways, also allows for the entry of new ideas. These new ideas are often not wholeheartedly accepted by a vernacular district, but are given regional characteristics. The builders and residents stamp these outside ideas with their own personality and way of life. In some regions the building itself may be a replica of a particular international type. However, the way in which the structure is built — re-using local materials, getting assistance from friends and neighbours, using the barter system for obtaining materials — are all ways in which the local region can express its personality. While the form and construction methods might be international, the use of a structure is often where one can see the local influences on the architectural type.

From 1920 to the present mass housing began to influence local architecture. Three unique bungalow types — the gable entry form, the long side entrance type and the barrack roof style — became the most common buildings in the Codroy Valley. While these houses were following an international pattern, local people still adjusted these forms to suit their own needs. For example, owners often built additions when a family expanded, or when there was a need for more space. In addition, there was much re-use occurring: builders often re-used the remains of older buildings when constructing these newer styles. Other builders chose to retain nineteenth century floor plan types and building features such as root cellars within these newer bungalow forms. Moreover, tourism played a role in the shaping of Codroy Valley architecture by introducing a sub-type of mass housing — the tourist bungalow or cabin — and by re-introducing log construction techniques to the district. While commonly employed by the pioneer settlers, by this time log construction had become vestigial and was no longer seen as a choice for builders. Yet, the tourist interest in this form encouraged some local residents to use this older technology in the construction of some of their outbuildings. This shows clearly how vernacular regions, while often geographically isolated, are nevertheless linked to and influenced by the wider North American society. Michael Taft argues that in Newfoundland scholars have often ignored the many links between isolated communities and mainstream North American society, and instead have focused on the pure folk culture maintained by the geographic isolation. He concludes his study of the influence of film and the itinerant person who played the movies by stating: "Despite the isolation of the outposts, popular culture is as much a reality there as anywhere in North America. For this reason, it is a distortion to study outpost life as though it were in a cultural vacuum."² Likewise, vernacular architecture is often an amalgam, a blending of local features with the wider mainstream architectural pattern. To ignore these important outside influences in any study is to distort the reality of a region's physical landscape.

While the built landscape of this district was shaped by its antecedents in Cape Breton Island, and international fashion, many specifically local aspects of Codroy Valley culture also affected the homes and outbuildings of the region.

An examination of house modifications and the tradition of moving houses show that vernacular buildings are not preserved forever in the same condition as when initially built, but are often being altered to suit the needs of the owners. Houses such as Fintan Downey's or Allan MacArthur's do not cease to be "vernacular" when major modifications occur; rather, the changes demonstrate local needs and wants, thereby providing the researcher with evidence for understanding the local characteristics of these houses. Allan MacArthur, a well known Gaelic tradition bearer and preserver of many aspects of Gaelic lore and Codroy Valley oral history, showed his interest in a new house style by completely modifying his older home to match the trend for houses with gable ends facing the road. To him, and to many Codroy Valley residents, the co-existence of older traditions and modernity was not a paradox. Allan could sing a Gaelic song or hold a ceilidh in his kitchen, but could also modify his house to look like a newer fashion, or to add a newer electric stove or refrigerator whenever he wanted. Likewise, Fintan thought it important to save many commonly used older objects such as a horse-drawn threshing machine, carding equipment, photographs, agricultural magazines, a diary written by his father and hand flails, but also modified his home by raising a roof and completely altering the facade of the dwelling. Older patterns and newer ideas exist in the Codroy Valley side by side, and I suspect that this was the case in most unique geographic or cultural regions in North America.

Likewise, local culture extensively influences vernacular architecture in most regions including the Codroy Valley. While a building such as Nicholas-Luedee's shed, once the Searston school house, may appear to be like many small, one-room school houses throughout North America, the process of moving this building to its present site offers insight into aspects of the local culture. For example, neighbours and friends aided in the whole process of relocating this structure. The move itself was an important community event that included much traditional activity in the form of food, reciprocity, neighbourliness and the like. By watching or even asking questions about this kind of event, I obtained a clearer sense of how the informal economy works in the Codroy Valley. Moreover, this building's use, first as a small dwelling for a married daughter, and later as a storage shed, provides an understanding of how important re-use is in this district.

Further insight into re-use, modification, and change is obtained by understanding how one farm — the Downey farm in Great Codroy — developed and changed with the passage of time. From the pioneer stage to the present we see how the Downeys created a farm, complete with a series of outbuildings built from portions of older buildings such as St. Thomas's school in Great Codroy. An examination of this farm provides a paradigm for Codroy Valley homes, offering insights into the kinds of activities and outbuildings that were common on Codroy Valley farmsteads. In addition, it offers a sense of the texture of everyday life on a Codroy Valley farm. The planting, the haying, the work processes of the Downeys, leads to an insight into the nature of vernacular architecture; that is, it is difficult to understand this kind of architecture in isolation. One must also know much about work and local culture before obtaining a clearer sense of the meaning of these buildings.

For example, there was a continual need for large kitchens from the time of original settlement to the present because of the kinds of activities for which this room was needed. This again shows that, to fully understand vernacular buildings, one must move beyond the physical structures to the context — the physical, social and cultural — to gain a better understanding of the interaction between people and buildings.

By travelling through the Codroy Valley, visiting the people, and closely analyzing the district's common buildings, I have gained an understanding of the processes involved in establishing a vernacular building tradition. Relying upon fieldwork, the never-ending assistance from new Codroy Valley friends, and available historical documentation, I have outlined some of the decipherable patterns in this unique ever-changing landscape showing that the dual forces of conservatism and dynamism have continually been at work in the development of this architectural tradition.

Vernacular architecture is developed and maintained in a complex manner over time in the Codroy Valley. A number of forces influence it, including: the conventional ways of building in the past, (particularly in the antecedent region), outside international architectural ideas, the mass housing tradition and aspects of local culture ranging from a house moving and modification tradition to customary activities such as weddings, wakes, visiting and mummering. It is inadequate to simply define vernacular in a negative way as many have done by calling it non-academic, non high-style, unsophisticated or non-professional, for vernacular architecture exists when a people or a community have some element of control over their physical environment. When individuals are able to continue to build homes or barns following older, conventional patterns in a region, when they are able to adjust and alter their architecture to suit their own needs, or when they are able to express their wishes and desires in making a home or building, we are dealing with architecture at the vernacular level. This does not mean that only old and rural architecture is vernacular, although my study and many vernacular architecture studies to date focus on older forms. Many new, urban houses also exhibit vernacular features. Only recently have scholars begun to explore the vernacular aspects of contemporary or mass housing. As Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach state: "Clearly more investigation of contemporary buildings, including commercial as well as residential structures, is needed."³ Tracy Kidder in *House* describes how Judith and Jonathan Souweine plan, discuss, and argue with an architect and builders in designing their new home on the outskirts of Amherst, Massachusetts. While the house they finally decide upon is a modern home based on a common older architectural style in the Amherst area — the Greek Revival — clearly the interaction between architect, builder, owner and community follows some of the patterns of vernacular architecture.⁴

This study of Codroy Valley architecture raises a number of issues about Canadian vernacular architecture. First, much more architectural fieldwork needs to be done in Canada's rural and urban communities before we can begin to understand the complexities of this country's vernacular buildings. Some of the structures examined in this study such as local bungalow and hay barracks are seldom recorded

in many architecture studies sponsored by local historical societies and municipalities. Yet we need the more common kinds of buildings recorded to fully understand the shaping of Canada's physical environment. Future fieldwork should not myopically focus on the buildings of the region's elite, but on buildings, both past and present, constructed and lived in by ordinary citizens.

There should also be more consultation in the future between people in local communities and designers, architects and planners outside the communities who make decisions about the kinds of buildings we live in. A knowledge of local cultural traditions and conventional ways of building can only help in designing more appropriate buildings to suit the needs of Canada's native groups, ethnic population and distinct geographic regions.

Codroy Valley people and their architectural tradition can teach others about creative re-use with respect to the physical environment. At a time when citizens are becoming more aware of both environmental destruction and preservation, the idea of creatively re-using older buildings for new purposes is one which is logical and intelligent. A knowledge of the way in which other Canadian communities and regions contends with its older buildings would be a great asset to developers, government agencies, and historical societies concerned with preservation.

Finally, there must be more attention paid to the impact of tourism on the country's regions. Even though the advent of tourism has greatly affected much of Canada, there is still not a comprehensive study of how it has shaped the taste and aesthetic of Canadian regions.

While doing fieldwork for this thesis I have traveled through what George Kubler calls, "mysterious uncharted regions" whether crawling about in bat-infested attics of empty houses, or attempting to make sense out of the complex patterns in the present and past Codroy Valley landscape.⁵ The people of the Codroy Valley made my journey easier by offering their continuous hospitality and assistance. I hope this regional study of the vernacular architecture of the Codroy Valley, based primarily on fieldwork, may offer some suggestions for future researchers in the ongoing attempt to understand the interrelationship between people and the built environment in Canada.

Notes

1. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962), p.72.
2. Michael Taft, "The Itinerant Movie-Man And His Impact On The Folk Culture Of The Outports Of Newfoundland," *Culture & Tradition*, 1 (1976), 119.
3. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, "Introduction," *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1986), xvi.
4. Tracy Kidder, *House* (New York: Avon Books, 1985).
5. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962), 18.

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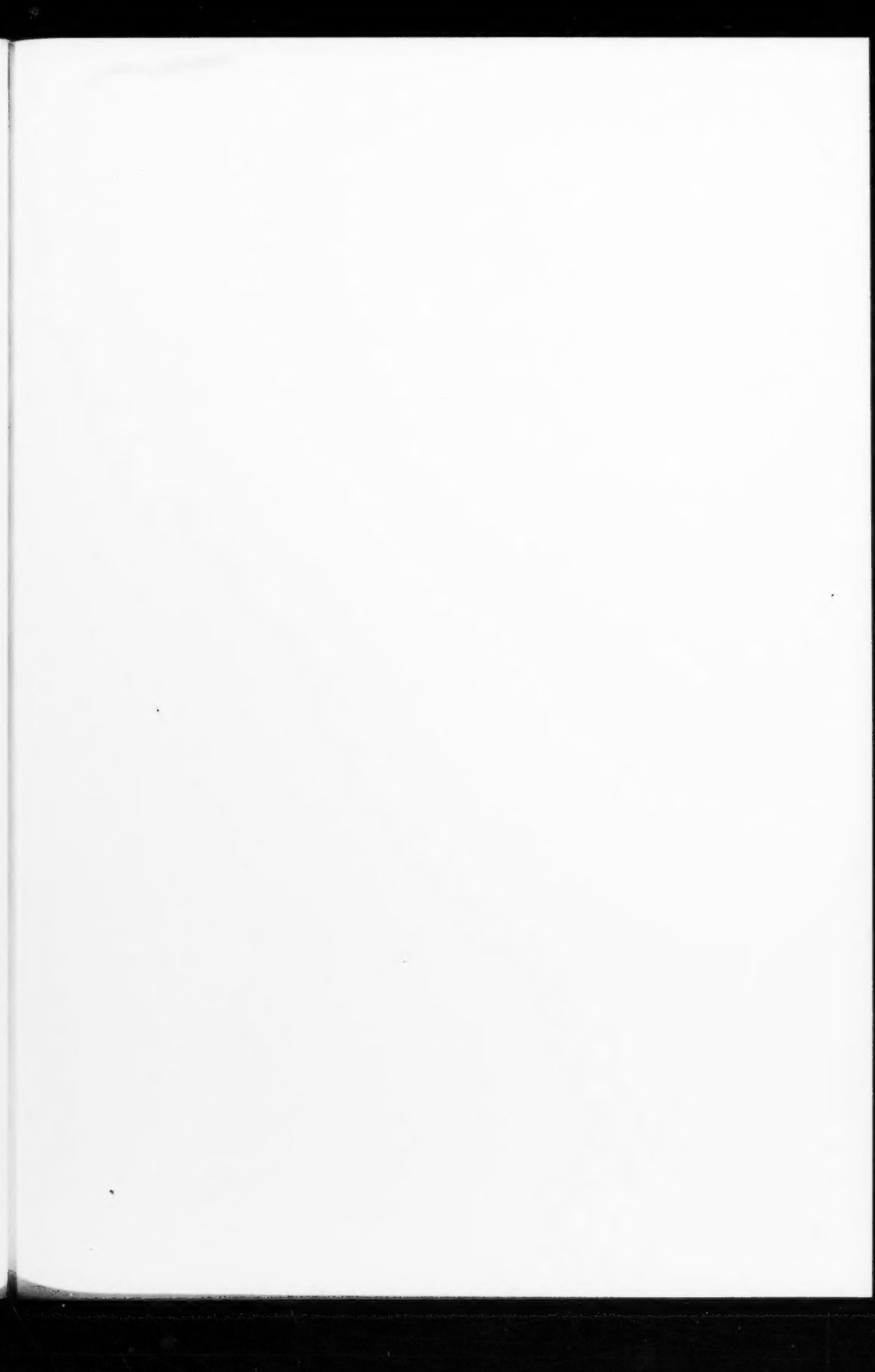
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Vernacular Architecture in the Codroy Valley is the story of a small Newfoundland community as told through its buildings. From adding on a kitchen to constructing a completely new house, the way people build and change their homes says a great deal about their lives, past and present. Richard MacKinnon's insights into the stories revealed by the buildings of the Codroy Valley will have you looking at the buildings in your own community in a whole new way.

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